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OR,

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A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY MR. SMITH.

Somers, whom misfortunes had humbled till fate could not awe nor death dismay, stood calm as a Christian in the crash of worlds.

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[*T. Davison, White-Friars.*]

THE RUNAWAY;

OR,

THE SEAT OF BENEVOLENCE.

CHAP. I.

AFTER Sir Thomas had left the company of Somers, he retired to his own houſe.

Every object he beheld reminded him of Sophia; he recalled to his memory the many happy hours he had there ſpent with her, during the life of his mother; and then took a rapid view of the occurrences which had taken place ſince that period, and by comparing them he found

that no real enjoyment was to be attained by a life of diſſipation.

He ruminated on the words that fell from Somers, that he ſhould never again obtain her, but by marriage. He had now no means whatever by which he could wreſt her from his protection, unleſs it were by marriage, and this his pride would not ſuffer him to adopt.

Aggravated and fretful, he retired to his bed, and there paſſed a ſleepleſs night.

He aroſe in the morning diſordered with an head-ache for want of reſt, and his heart throbbing through the recollection of the preſent circumſtances.

To eaſe this torture of mind, he again peruſed the few lines that Sophia had written with the pencil, and diſſected every word of it.

The

The firſt word "Farewel," made his heart ſink within him, and he dreaded leſt the event had already taken place. He next proceeded, "dear to my heart, but deteſtable to my recollection!"—"Ah, my God!" cried he, "what a lively affection muſt ſhe poſſeſs, that not all the cruelties of my conduct could obliterate it! 'Fear nothing from me:' here," ſaid he, "is another inſtance of her regard; ſhe was unwilling that I ſhould have a moment of uneaſineſs on her account, and therefore removes it by this aſſurance: how many wretched moments have I occaſioned her, and yet thus ſhe amiably returns it!" He next read, "I can die, but cannot ſeek revenge." "I have been credibly informed," ſaid he, "that ſhe is ſeriouſly ill; am I then to murder the object that I love?—

the object that would die ſooner than ſhe would give me offence, or bring upon me the puniſhment I deſerve? And yet to marry her, what would the world think of ſuch an act! Oh, Somers," exclaimed he, "you have a heart deſtitute of feeling, or you would not thus delight in torturing a fellow-creature. But I ſee how it is, he wiſhes to be revenged on me for my conduct to Miſs Leſley: and yet," continued he, "that cannot be the caſe; he has it in his power to puniſh me effectually, and ſtill he contents himſelf by demanding an annuity for her, or to reſign her to me on honourable terms."

In this manner he reaſoned with himſelf, his pride combating with his affection alternately, during the chief part of the day; at length he came to a determination

mination of again waiting upon Somers.

In the mean time Somers reflected on what Sir Thomas had utterred; he ſaw clearly there was an unalterable attachment on his ſide, and therefore took an opportunity of ſpeaking with Sophia when there was no one elſe preſent.

Somers recapitulated to her the propoſitions he had made to Sir Thomas.

"Do not inſiſt upon any thing for me," ſaid Sophia; "I cannot endure the thought of it; nor would it render me a ſervice.

"A few weeks will end my ſorrows here; do not, therefore, during the ſmall ſpace of time I have to live, force me to turn my ſhame into the means of profit.

"I ſhould be happy," continued ſhe, "if Sir Thomas would reſtore to my

hat he has deprived him of; that
only be an act of juſtice; but as to
elf, there is no compenſation he can
ive that will reſtore peace to my mind."

"If," ſaid Somers, "Sir Thomas ſhould aſk your hand in marriage, would you agree to his requeſt?"

Sophia heaved a heavy ſigh. "That he will never do," reſumed ſhe: "I once fondly hoped his affection was pure; but he has fatally convinced me of my error."

"I doubt," rejoined Somers, "whether he has not a ſincere regard for you; his conduct is the reſult of a depravity mingled with pride and affection; nor ſhould I be ſurpriſed on hearing ſuch a propoſal from him."

"Mr. Somers," ſaid Sophia, "I can ſay that to you, which I cannot to my father,

father, who ſuffers himſelf to be governed by paſſion and inveterate hatred. If Sir Thomas ſhould make ſuch a propoſal, and you ſhould be convinced it originates through a repentance for the paſt, and a ſincere regard for me, I ſhould think myſelf highly culpable in refuſing him; but if it have its origin in fear, not all the affection I ever muſt poſſeſs, nor the advice of my deareſt friends, will compel me to accept him."

This converſation was interrupted by the entrance of Sir Thomas; he had paſſed the ſervants, and approached towards the ſitting-room, having obſerved Bridport walking in the garden at a diſtance, and therefore had no fear on his account.

When he entered the room he ran and

aught her in his arms, "No power on earth," ſaid he, "ſhall ever part us more!"

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Sophia, and ſunk upon a chair, almoſt fainting.

"Why this intruſion?" cried Somers. "Miſs Bridport is under my protection; nor will I ſubmit to her being inſulted by your preſence;" then ringing the bell, a ſervant attended—"Deſire Mr. Bridport and Theodore to come to my aſſiſtance."

Theodore, on hearing his name mentioned, entered the room.

"For Heaven's ſake," cried Sir Thomas, "do not call Bridport, but firſt hear what I have to ſay."

"I can attend to nothing while Miſs Bridport is in the room," replied Somers; "what you have to ſay may poſſibly be unfit

unfit for her to hear, and I will not ſuffer any inſult to be offered her."

"I informed you laſt night," reſumed Sir Thomas, "I could not live without her; therefore name your terms; and if I can, conſiſtent with the reſpect I owe my family, agree to them I will."

"Terms!" cried Somers indignantly; "what terms can ſhe attend to with honour, but thoſe of marriage? but you are led away by a falſe pride: you talk of the reſpect due to your family; if you had ſtudied that, you would not have done an act to bring diſgrace upon it; nor would you heſitate to make a reparation for the injury you have done.

"Sophia has it in her power to attach eternal infamy on your name; but, prompted by affection, refuſes ſo to do: yes, that amiable girl, now ſinking into

the grave, a monument of your cruelty, is mindful of your honour; bluſh when you conſider how unmindful in return you are of her's. But I will eſtimate this mighty condeſcenſion:--You are a baronet; her grandfather on one ſide was a beneficed clergyman, on the other an officer in the army. Is there any diſgrace in being allied to a perſon thus reſpectably deſcended?

"She has received a brilliant education, and would adorn a court; what more can you deſire, except it be unbounded affection? and has ſhe not this in its fulleſt extent? You declare you have an affection for her; would you wiſh to conſult your own happineſs, by rendering miſerable the object that you love? Behold that form, once an aſſemblage of beauty, but now, through your monſtrous

ſtrous vices, nearly reduced to the grave!

"Think, if ſhe is not timely ſaved, what muſt be your reflections."

"Say no more," cried Sir Thomas, "but plead with her in my behalf; I feel aſhamed of what is paſt; if marriage can atone, I inſtantly agree to it."

"What am I to ſay?" reſumed Somers, addreſſing himſelf to Sophia; "will you accept of Sir Thomas, who thus repents, and offers the only atonement you can accept?"

Sophia could make no reply, her heart was too full for utterance.

"You muſt permit her to retire," continued Somers; "and reſt aſſured the ſtrong affection ſhe entertains will compel her to accept your offer."

"Can you," cried Sir Thomas as he

attended her to the door, "can you forgive the paſt, and conſent to ſhare my name and fortune?"

Sophia turned her eyes upon him that were flowing with tears, yet betokened reconciliation; and preſſing his hand, left the room.

"Now, Sir Thomas," cried Somers, advancing towards him, and taking hold of his hand, "you have conſented to the only act that could reconcile me to you; be aſſured the plan you have adopted will yield you more ſolid happineſs, than any other you could have purſued."

"I feel the truth of your aſſertion," replied Sir Thomas, "and bluſh that I did not ſooner put it in practice:" then turning to Theodore, "It gives me great pleaſure," ſaid he, "to find you here; it was through my means you were neceſ-

ſitated

ſitated to quit this place; is there any apology I can make that will atone for my conduct to you?"

"I aſſure you," replied Theodore, "your promiſe to Miſs Bridport has placed you ſo high in my eſtimation, there needs no apology from you to me for what is paſt; I therefore requeſt it may be conſigned to oblivion."

"Theodore," ſaid Sir Thomas, "I ſincerely thank you; and, perhaps, in token of our reconciliation, you will do me the favour to ſpend a part of your time at my houſe; I ſhall be proud of your company."

Theodore aſſured him he would do himſelf the honour.

Somers now requeſted Sir Thomas would withdraw without ſeeing Bridport. "He is rather inveterate," ſaid he; "you muſt

muſt plead in his excuſe the feelings of a parent: if he were to ſee you at this time, very poſſibly ſome unpleaſant words might paſs between you."

Sir Thomas agreed to the propoſal; and, promiſing to call again on the following morning, departed.

Somers now ſought out Bridport, for the purpoſe of relating what had paſſed.

Bridport was in company with his daughter; and having obſerved her tears, which were ſtill viſible, and concluding affection for Sir Thomas to be the cauſe, was harſhly reproving her for her weakneſs, and beſtowing a variety of invectives againſt him.

When Somers entered, "Here," cried Bridport, "is an obſtinate girl, that is ſtill repining for a villain whom ſhe ought to deſpiſe!"

"Hold,"

"Hold," rejoined Somers, "let theſe invectives ceaſe: I have ſeen Sir Thomas; he has commiſſioned me to requeſt you will conſent to his union with your daughter; ſhe will ſhortly become Lady Blandford."

"Never," replied Bridport haſtily. "I will labour for her night and day before I will conſent to her being allied to ſuch a monſter.—Does he think to palliate his crime, and foil my reſentment, by theſe means? if he does, he will find himſelf wonderouſly diſappointed!"

"I can have no motive," rejoined Somers, "in adviſing you, but what ariſes from friendſhip to both you and your daughter; I therefore requeſt you will ſeriouſly and diſpaſſionately conſider of the propoſal, before you give it your final negative. Sir Thomas repents having conducted himſelf

himſelf towards you as he has done, and is ready to make the greateſt reparation in his power: at the ſame time his offer plainly evinces the affection he has for your daughter; which affection is as fully returned on her ſide; it will therefore be cruel to withhold your conſent, and permit me to add that I think, under all the circumſtances, would be highly unjuſt."

"You never was treated as I have been," reſumed Bridport; "and therefore know not how you would act if you were in my ſituation.

"You perhaps know not what it is to be a father, and therefore cannot eſtimate my feelings; can I ever take him by the hand after what is paſt? can I ever eſteem him, ſeeing he ſo juſtly merits my reſentment? I ſhould, indeed, be ſorry, after the many favours I have received from

from you, to gain your disapprobation by any conduct of mine, or by any thing I may advance, yet I cannot help remarking; you carry your humanity and forgiveness too far; the only excuse I can make for it is, that you as a man can overlook, what I as a father neither can or will."

"You force me," resumed Somers, "to speak more plainly than I intended. I am of opinion, that the voice of a father in this case ought not to interrupt the union; in fact, I think it infamous to attempt it."

"Ah, by Heaven," exclaimed Bridport, "if she dares to take him, she shall take may eternal curse with her!"

Sophia caught hold of her father's hand, while she bedewed it with her tears,

tears, and entreated him to recal that fatal ſentence.

Bridport was deaf to her petition.

Somers requeſted Sophia to leave the room for a few minutes; as ſoon as ſhe had retired, "I ſtand amazed," ſaid Somers, "at the depravity of human nature; your conduct appears to me in a worſe light than the former conduct of Sir Thomas: he had the ſtrong and almoſt ungovernable paſſions of youth to plead in paliation of his offence; but what have you to plead, ſeeing he repents, and offers all within his power as an atonement?

"You ſeem determined to ſacrifice your daughter's future peace, if not her life, merely to perpetuate an inveterate and unchriſtian-like hate."

"My daughter," rejoined Bridport,

"will

" will ſoon forget him, and will be much happier in a ſubordinate ſituation, than ſhe can ever expect to be with a man of his libertine principles: you will oblige me by not ſaying any thing further on the ſubject at preſent."

" I will leave you," rejoined Somers, " to think of it, and I truſt your good ſenſe will teach you to conquer this unmanly and ill-timed revenge, the conſequences of which muſt prove fatal to both the peace of your daughter and yourſelf."

CHAP. II.

SOMERS having left Bridport to ruminate on what had paſſed, retired to a private apartment.

An idea ſuggeſted itſelf, whereby he hoped to do away the reſentment of Bridport, which was, to pourtray the conſequences that muſt attend his acting in this inveterate manner.

He therefore ſat down and compoſed a ballad for the purpoſe of giving it him, if he ſhould continue to withhold his conſent.

On the following morning he met him in the pleaſure-ground, and again reſumed the ſubject; but all he could utter had no effect on him.

When

When they reached the breakfaſt parlor, Sophia was there, but ſo much altered for the worſe, as to alarm every one preſent.

Somers obſerved Bridport during breakfaſt viewing her attentively, and thought he heard a ſigh eſcape him; as ſoon, therefore, as ſhe had quitted the room, he determined to produce the lines he had written.

Although Somers had no merit as a poet, yet he conſidered they contained a ſubject which would touch his feelings.

"Here is an old ballad," ſaid he, "will you do me the favour to read it?"

Bridport took it; but not having his ſpectacles about him, he requeſted Theodore would oblige him by repeating it.

Theodore read as follows:

FAR

FAR on the weſtern borders bound,
Near yon ſtupendous hills,
Where flocks adorn the verdant ground,
And pleaſing murm'ring rills,

Lies Blandford vale, from breeze ſerene,
With nature's riches ſtored:
A manſion grac'd the lovely ſcene,
And own'd Rinaldo lord.

Rinaldo young, gay, proud, and vain,
In nature's gifts array'd,
Poſſeſs'd this rich, this wide domain,
And towns that round him laid.

Nurtur'd in pride, he ſcorn'd the lot
Of thoſe who, bleſt with health,
Toil'd daily in their fields or cot,
T'increaſe his fund of wealth.

Amidſt the tenantry's wide hoſt
That clos'd the diſtant ſcene;
'Midſt hills that in the clouds are loſt,
And groves that intervene;

Stood Damon's cot, from breeze ſecure
His barns with plenty ſtor'd,
His wicket open to the poor,
And welcome at his board.

One only daughter Damon had,
Seléna was her name;
With virtue was the damſel clad,
And ſpotleſs was her fame.

Fair as a lily was the maid,
As fair as ſhe was pure;
Save when a virtuous bluſh betray'd
Her lot t'have been obſcure.

Selena's beauty ſoon was taught
To reach Rinaldo's ear;
Beauty ſurpaſſing human thought,
Excelling far and near.

Rinaldo liſt'ned to the tale,
Which ſcarce believing true,
He taught his ſteps to tread the vale
That gave the breath ſhe drew.

Entranc'd with wonder he beheld
Of Blandford's vale the pride,
And vow'd he was by love compell'd
To take her as his bride.

Selena view'd with trembling awe
The proſtrate noble youth;
And heard him vow the marriage law
Should ſeal his love and truth.

Full ſoon ſhe felt what 'twas to love,
And what ſhe felt confeſt;
While he call'd Heav'n and Earth to prove
How truly he was bleſt.

Happy had been Rinaldo's lot;
But that, poſſeſſing pride,
He could not ſtoop, from Damon's cot
To take Rinaldo's bride.

Far diff'rent means he now purſu'd,
Selena to obtain:
She yet continu'd unſubdu'd,
And all his arts were vain.

One eve far winding in a wood
Th' enamour'd couple ſtray'd;]
Rinaldo vow'd his paſſion could
No longer be delay'd;

Then claſp'd Selena to his heart:
Selena trembling ſu'd:
She whom he ne'er could gain by art
Was ſoon by force ſubdu'd.

Ah me! what tortures rent her breaſt,
By ſad reflection's aid!
By him who thus her heart poſſeſs'd—
By him to be betray'd!

"Alas! my father," then ſhe cry'd,
"To thee I'll quickly fly;
In thy fond arms my ſorrows hide,
And learn the way to die."

Rinaldo now Selena view'd—
E'en lovely in diſtreſs—
His vows of conſtancy renew'd,
To make his crime the leſs.

" Think not," cry'd he, " that we will part,
This act has made me thine;
And, by the love that ſways my heart,
Thou ſhalt be only mine."

Then, ſwift as thought, he quick convey'd
The tearful, ſtruggling fair;
In vain ſhe cry'd, in vain ſhe pray'd,
'Twas praying to the air.

Safe lodg'd beneath his manſion's dome:
" This houſe, my love," cry'd he,
" Shall be your priſon, or your own,
As you ſubmit to me."

Sad was the tale the ev'ning brought
To wetched Damon's ear;
And newly was this parent taught
To ſhed a parent's tear.

With haſty ſtrides he croſs'd the vale,
To claim his ruin'd child;
But paſſion choak'd the heavy tale
While he his lord revil'd.

Unus'd to bear a tenant's ſcorn,
Rinaldo frets with rage;
From houſe and land was Damon torn,
And left to want in age.

But Damon ſoon, with matchleſs art,
Beguil'd the wary lord!
And claſpt Selena to his heart—
His child again reſtor'd.

Again Rinaldo frets with rage;
But rage was now in vain;
And love far diff'rent thoughts engage
To eaſe his heart-felt pain.

" Ah! what avail theſe wide domains,
Since dear Selena's loſt?
All now appear as deſert plains,
Since thus my hopes are croſt.

Then welcome love, and farewel pride,
Selena ſhall be mine;
Selena as Rinaldo's bride,
In Britiſh courts ſhall ſhine."

Then quickly fled th'enamour'd lord
To Damon's humble cot,
Explain'd his wiſh, his ſuit preferr'd,
And ſhew'd the prieſt he brought.

But Damon ſtill with paſſion burn'd,
Refus'd to hear his pray'r;
And from his door Rinaldo ſpurn'd—
Rinaldo, Blandford's heir.

With trembling ſteps, and bended knee,
Selena next implor'd;
"Alas! my father, let me be
To Blandford's lord reſtor'd."

"Avaunt!" the cruel father cry'd,
"Nor this ſame plaint rehearſe;
If thou wilt be Rinaldo's bride,
Take him—but take my curſe!"

With dread ſhe heard the dire decree,
And ſaw his anger'd eye;
"Recal it back, or ſoon," cry'd ſhe,
"You'll ſee Selena die."

But Damon, deaf to nature's call,
Beheld her heart-felt grief;
And tears that piteouſly did fall,
But gave her no relief.

Soon pale and wan Selena grew:
"Rinaldo—Oh!" ſhe cry'd;
Then ſwift reſign'd the breath ſhe drew,
And, broken-hearted, died.

Rinaldo heard the mournful tale,
And wept Selena's fate;
Repentant ſorrow now prevail'd—
'Twas now, alas! too late.

Too late repentant Damon view'd
Selena, lifeleſs fair!
And curs'd the hour he e'er refus'd
To liſten to her pray'r.

From this ſad tale a moral learn,
"Bad paſſions ſhould ſubſide:"
Rinaldo ruin'd—Damon ſpurn'd—
And thus Selena died.

Somers kept his eye attentively fixed upon Bridport; he ſaw him change colour ſeveral times during the reading of it.

When Theodore had finiſhed, he drew out his handkerchief and wiped a tear from his eye the ſubject had occaſioned; and this was ſucceeded by another; at length riſing up he preſſed the hand of Somers, and exclaimed, "My dear friend, I ſee my error, you have conquered.

"You have not only been the means of reſtoring me to liberty and the ſociety of my daughter, but you have reſtored me to myſelf by ridding my heart of an unpleaſant gueſt."

At this period Sir Thomas ſent in his name, and Bridport requeſted he might be admitted.

When Sir Thomas entered, Bridport was preparing to addreſs him; but at the ſame

ſame time, with a countenance ſomewhat ſtern.

"Firſt," cried Somers, "permit me to ſpeak: I ſee Sir Thomas is prepared for an apology, and if I may judge from Mr. Bridport's countenance it will be favourably received; but if you will follow my advice, let all that is paſt be forgotten, a recapitulation may irritate the wound, but cannot heal it." Then addreſſing himſelf to Sir Thomas, "I have," ſaid he, "ſpoken with Mr. Bridport concerning your requeſt, and he has conſented, truſting you will make his daughter happy, which alone can render him ſo."

"Mr. Bridport may depend," rejoined Sir Thomas, "I will make her happineſs the ſtudy of my life; ſince I have been taught to feel the loſs of her, I know how to eſtimate her worth."

"Fulfil your promiſe," rejoined Bridport, "and you will make me regret I ever harboured an unfavourable opinion of you."

Sir Thomas aſſured him he ſhould take a pleaſure in ſo doing; then taking Somers by the hand, requeſted a private audience with him; but Bridport expreſſing a deſire to go in ſearch of his daughter, gave Sir Thomas an opportunity of communicating his buſineſs. "I have brought with me," ſaid he, "the ſum which I wreſted from Bridport, and likewiſe what I think will be ſufficient to compenſate for the loſs of property he has ſuſtained through me; and will thank you to deliver it to him when I am gone, as it would, perhaps, only renew a diſagreeable ſubject if I were to tender it to him."

Somers agreed with him in opinion, and

and promiſed to act according to his requeſt.

" Having diſpoſed of this buſineſs," reſumed Sir Thomas, " I will now attend to what more materially concerns me: this morning the rector of your pariſh waited on me, requeſting I would exert my influence with Sir Charles, in behalf of a living which became vacant yeſterday on his eſtate, by the death of the incumbent.

" You are perfectly aware I can now have little hope of ſucceeding in an application to Sir Charles, I therefore referred the rector to you, and he will ſhortly be here, as I paſſed him on the road.

" Mr. Bridport was brought up to the church, and has taken orders; I need ſay no more to you than I ſhould eſteem it

a favour if you would obtain the vacant living for him: Sir Charles will deny you nothing."

"You may depend," replied Somers, "I will take the earlieſt opportunity of forwarding your wiſhes. I ſhall now," continued Somers, "take a pleaſure in introducing you to Miſs Bridport; at the ſame time permit me to remind you, that you cannot too ſoon carry your intentions into effect."

Sir Thomas replied by informing him he had ſent for a licence, and ſhould have it in his power before the expiration of three days.

Somers now deſired a ſervant to acquaint Miſs Bridport he ſhould be happy to ſpeak with her; Sophia attended the ſummons; and the rector having ſent in his name, Somers left her in the company of

Sir

Sir Thomas, to enjoy that happineſs which can only ariſe from a virtuous attachment.

Somers attended the rector, who acquainted him with his buſineſs, at the ſame time adding, that the intereſt he took in the welfare of every individual had prompted him to requeſt his interference.

" I ſhould ill deſerve the character you beſtow on me," replied Somers, " if I acceded to your wiſh.

" Can I aſk Sir Charles to give you the vacant living, while you are already in the poſſeſſion of ſo rich a one, and while numbers of clergymen are nearly in want of bread?

" Excluſive of this, the little intereſt I have is engaged for a perſon who ſtands in need of one; neither do I approve of

a miniſter holding ſeveral livings, as it would be impoſſible for him to do his duty by the different pariſhioners."

Much argument enſued; but as Somers was firm in the latter opinion, it was of no uſe.

In the courſe of the day Sir Charles, as was now uſual, came to viſit him.

Somers commenced the converſation by informing him he had a favour to requeſt.

Sir Charles deſired him to name it, and if it lay in his power he would oblige him.

Somers took him at his word, and mentioned the vacant living, expreſſing his wiſh that he would beſtow it on Bridport.

"What, give it to a farmer!" cried Sir

Sir Charles; "that would indeed be a little ſingular."

Somers informed him Bridport had been brought up to the church, and had taken orders; "I will anſwer for it," ſaid he, "Bridport will preach as good a ſermon as you would have patience to hear, for I have generally noticed you take a nap during the time."

"You are not aware," reſumed Sir Charles, "I could have, perhaps, a thouſand pounds for it."

"Very poſſible," replied Somers; "but then you would loſe the pleaſure of beſtowing it; therefore, permit me to call Bridport; I ſee you have a ſtrong inclination to oblige me."

Sir Charles ſmiled, and Somers rang the bell, and requeſted his attendance; when

when Bridport entered, "SirCharles," ſaid he, " has a favour to requeſt of you."

Bridport bowed, " he ſhould be happy," he ſaid, " to oblige Sir Charles in any thing as far as lay in his power."

Sir Charles found there was no poſſibility of receding, acquainted him with his intentions, and deſired he would take poſſeſſion of it immediately.

Bridport teſtified his gratitude, and informed him concerning the event which was about to take place between Sir Thomas and his daughter.

Sir Charles congratulated him; " It happens fortunate," ſaid he, " that the living became vacant at this period, as you will now be able to live in a ſtate of reſpectability without being obligated to Sir Thomas for the means; as I have no doubt,

notwithſtanding

notwithſtanding his preſent contrition, your mind is too much hurt to receive any gratuity from him."

Bridport aſſured him the gift was doubly acceptable on that account.

Somers now produced the notes Sir Thomas had given him, and deſired he would accept them.

Bridport heſitated.

"Take them," rejoined Sir Charles, "he has done no more than an act of juſtice."

Somers joining in the requeſt, he accepted them; after which, he left Sir Charles and Bridport together, while he went to Sir Thomas who was ſtill at the lodge, and communicated the agreeable intelligence.

Sir Thomas had not ſo far forgot his pride, but that it gave him pleaſure on the receipt of it; he preferred marrying the daughter

daughter of a beneficed clergyman, sooner than the daughter of a farmer.

Every thing now seemed to pass on in uninterrupted happiness. Somers received letters from London relative to Mrs. Somers.

He had hitherto not expended a fourth of his annual income, notwithstanding the many benefits he daily bestowed; but now a prospect of felicity began to open, through his again being blessed with the society of the only person who could render him happy: he determined on altering his mode of life; and, therefore, immediately hired servants, and procured a carriage for her accommodation.

He had not known for a considerable time what it was to feel the want of these extra comforts, having no person to share them with him; neither did he care what

was

was produced on his table, his heart having been too much oppreſſed to taſte any enjoyment.

But in proportion as his ſorrows decreaſed, ſo did he again begin to reliſh the bleſſings of life.

Sir Thomas having obtained a licence, Somers, accompanied by Sir Charles and Bridport, attended him and Sophia to the altar, where they regiſtered before God their irrevocable vows of truth and affection; after which, Somers requeſted Sir Thomas and Lady Blandford would ſpend a few days with him.

Sir Thomas agreed to remain for two days, but pleaded the neceſſity of returning to his houſe at the expiration of that period.

The day was ſpent with the utmoſt harmony and conviviality.

And

And Sir Thomas was taught to experience the difference between pleaſure that originates in vice, and happineſs attained by virtue unalloyed by the remorſe of conſcience, the ſure attendant on vicious tranſactions.

Sir Thomas was happy in having rendered others ſo; his Sophia received him to her arms with ecſtacy and gratitude, inſtead of grief and horror; delightful exchange! an exchange that endeared her to him more than ever, and made him regret the happy days he had loſt in purſuing a different line of conduct.

On the following morning Sir Thomas obſerving Somers walking in his garden, approached him, and taking hold of his hand, "How ſhall I, my friend," cried he, "find words to thank you? I had ſtrangely

ſtrangely erred, and ſhould in all probability have purſued the ſame courſe, had you not checked me, and by pointing out the path I ought to take, conducted me to real happineſs; permit me, therefore, to utter the effuſions of a grateful heart."

Somers aſſured him that nothing could equal the pleaſure he received in hearing him thus expreſs himſelf.

Lady Blandford made her appearance at breakfaſt, while the pleaſing tranquillity that beamed from her eye enlivened the heart of her father, and ſpread a joy around her that each participated of.

The day arrived that they had fixed for leaving Cliffdown-lodge; Lady Blandford requeſted to ſpeak with Somers; but when he approached, her

heart

heart was too full to utter what ſhe wiſhed.

She took his hand and preſt it, while the tears trickled from her eye; "Think," cried ſhe, "what I would ſay, but cannot; you have been to me a dear friend indeed, and more than a parent; may Heaven bleſs you, as you have ſtrove to make me bleſt!"

Somers returned the preſſure of her hand, but his heart was ſo feelingly alive to the joy that was pourtrayed in her countenance, that he could not articulate a ſentence.

Sir Thomas now advanced, and taking her hand, led her to his carriage, which was waiting for them; Bridport followed, as Sir Thomas requeſted he would ſpend a few weeks with him, before he finally took

took up his reſidence at the living Sir Charles had beſtowed on him.

Somers was now once more left with his young friend Theodore.

CHAP. III.

SOMERS waited with painful anxiety for a letter from Freeman that ſhould acquaint him with his ſucceſs relative to Mrs. Somers; when the poſt arrived and no letter was brought, it conſiderably added to his perplexity: another poſt arrived, and ſtill no letter was produced.

While he ſat ruminating on what could occaſion Freeman's ſilence, he was greatly aſtoniſhed on beholding Sternhold, his father-in-law, approaching the houſe, in company with Sir Charles.

Sternhold had left London, thinking he ſhould be able to overtake his daughter on the road, and could then prevail on her to return with him; but having been miſinformed

miſinformed reſpecting her departure, and as ſhe had purſued a different road to that ſhe intended, he could not obtain any intelligence of her; he therefore imagined ſhe muſt either be in London or had reached her huſband.

He determined, therefore, on paying a viſit to Somers, as he ſhould then have an opportunity of ſatisfying himſelf, as likewiſe to load him with ſome reproaches for the method he had taken to regain the poſſeſſion of her.

Having travelled within a few miles of Briſtol, he ſtopped at an inn for the purpoſe of enquiring which was the neareſt way to his houſe.

The inn-keeper informed him it would be the moſt expedient to diſcharge his chaiſe, and walk over the fields to the ferry, by which means he would reach

Cliffdown-

Cliffdown lodge in as ſhort a time as he could arrive at Briſtol.

Sternhold took his advice, and having paid the lad, was preparing to follow the directions, when a man who had experienced the benevolence of Somers approached him, and offered to be his guide.

"Do you know the fellow?" ſaid Sternhold.

"The fellow!" rejoined the man; "Mr. Somers deſerves a more reſpectful title.—If it is the ſame perſon I mean, there are few ſuch worthy gentlemen in the county."

Sternhold replied to this ſpeech with a ſmile of contempt.

"Oh!" cried the man, "if you are good at that, you muſt e'en go by yourſelf," and left him to purſue his walk.

When

When he reached the ferry, and had got into the boat, "Is there not a man," ſaid he, "of the name of Somers, who lives near this place?"

"Aye, the Lord love him," cried the ferryman; "I'ſe wull ſhew thee to his houſe;—I'ſe be gooing thig way, and if zo be as I waunt, I'ſe would get up on the night to do un a ſarvice."

"The raſcal has your good name," reſumed Sternhold.

The ferryman had unfaſtened his boat, and was in the act of puſhing it off. "The raſcal!" cried he; "thee beeſt miſtaken, Muſter Zummers is no raſcal; and zince thee thinkſt un is, thee muſt get over as thee canſt, vor God rot un if I'ſe take thee; I'ſe dount like the looks o'thee."

Having ſaid this, he ſprung out of the

boat, faſtened it as before, and took the paddle with him.

Sternhold ſtood in the boat, loſt in aſtoniſhment at the conduct of the man; and at length he declared, if he did not inſtantly return and ferry him over, he would make him.

"What!" cried the ferryman, "doſt think I be avraid o'thee.—If thee wants a good drubbing, I'll ſet my wife to beat thee, I'll not voul my hands o'thee."

Sternhold found it would be impoſſible to perſuade the man, and therefore left the boat and purſued his walk along the bank of the river, till he diſcovered a man ſeated in a boat fiſhing.

Sternhold, by offering a trifling gratuity, prevailed on him to row him over, during which time he prudently held his peace; but

but when he ſet his foot on the ſhore, "Do you know," ſaid he, "a petty gentleman that lives near this place, whoſe name is Somers?"

"A petty gentleman!" replied the man; "odds bobs he makes the great gentlemen aſhamed o' themſelves. I'ſe dount think his vortune be large, and yet it would zurpriſe thee to hear the main good he does, there is not a poor body for mailes round but has eat his bread and cheeſe;—no zooner aſk than give."

"So, I ſuppoſe," reſumed Sternhold; "he always was a prodigal ſcoundrel."

"Look thee," cried the man, "I'ſe dount knaw what thee meanſt by calling him a ſcoundrel. I'ſe think thee beeſt no better than thee ſhouldſt be, zo take thy zixpence back; I'ſe not ha' thy money. Muſter Zummers a ſcoundrel! I'ſe be

half a mind to take thee to Zur Charles vor that, he'd teach thee to call names; here, take thy money, and thank thyſelf thee doſent catch a click o' thy head, vor I'ſe never had o' better mind o' my life."

Two or three colliers now came up, and Sternhold, fearing they ſhould hold in the ſame ſtory, thought it prudent to purſue his way without waiting for an anſwer to his queſtion.

When he had walked out of ſight of the fiſherman, he requeſted of a perſon he met, if he would inform him where to find Mr. Somers.

The man turned round to direct him, when looking towards a hill, "There be Zur Charles," ſaid he, "going down the hill. I'ſe be ſworn he be gooing to zee un,

un, as they be main thick. If thee aſkeſt un he'll ſhew thee."

"Who is Sir Charles?" reſumed Sternhold.

"Oh, he be a main great gentleman," replied the man, "and owns all the land about here."

Sternhold thanked him, and ſhortly overtaking Sir Charles, repeated his enquiry.

Sir Charles replied by informing him he was going to his houſe, and would conduct him.

Sternhold, from the intimation he had received from the laſt man, thought Sir Charles would be able to inform him relative to his daughter. "Is Mr. Somers a married man?" ſaid he.

"He is," replied Sir Charles; "his

wife has been with her relations in London, and is hourly expected here."

"Then she is not yet arrived?" rejoined Sternhold, hastily.

Sir Charles was surprised at the eagerness of his enquiry, and looking in his face, thought he could discern a strong likeness between the portrait of Mrs. Somers and his present companion.

"I really do not know," replied he, "but hope she is. My visit to Mr. Somers this morning is to congratulate him. I should be sorry to be disappointed."

"He will scarcely thank you," resumed Sternhold. "If what I have heard be true, he only wants her society merely for a motive of revenge to her father; trust me, he has no regard whatever for her,

her, but as it affords him an opportunity of exerciſing his ſpleen."

"You wrong him," cried Sir Charles; "the father is the very character you deſcribe the ſon to be. I have witneſſed his ſorrow on her account, ſorrows which have nearly brought him to the grave.

"I verily believe, ſo much is he beloved in this country, that if her father were to make his appearance, and utter ſuch a ſentence, he would be thrown into the river."

Sir Charles then took a review of the conduct of Somers ſince he had known him, and animadverted with great ſeverity on the inveteracy of his father-in-law. "Inſtead of being proud he has ſuch a ſon," continued Sir Charles, "he cannot endure to hear one ſentence uttered in his praiſe: thoſe who have found it their in-

tereſt to be acquainted with Sternhold, have invariably preſerved it by ſpeaking againſt the ſon; confident that one word ſpoken in his favour would loſe them his friendſhip; and thus it is he has found food for his malice.

"But the happineſs of my friend Somers is, or ſhortly will be, reſtored to him, through the poſſeſſion of his wife. It will then be his own fault if ever he ſuffer her relations to have an opportunity of poiſoning her mind for the future."

What Sir Charles had related of Somers made a ſtrong impreſſion on the mind of Sternhold, and he could not help obſerving by way of reply, that if Somers merited the character he had given of him, his father-in-law muſt have been greatly impoſed on indeed.

"It is in vain," reſumed Sir Charles,

"to

"to ſay any thing in juſtification of Sternhold; his infamous conduct in endeavouring to ſeparate a man and wife cannot be excuſed, nor can any thing be pleaded in palliation.

"I am of opinion, that a man who has been guilty of ſuch a practice, is deliberately bad; and therefore never conſulted the propriety or impropriety of the ſtep. It was ſufficient for him to know that it accorded with his own ſavage nature."

"You wrong him," rejoined Sternhold; "as I am confident, when he ſhall hear the character of his ſon impartially laid down, he will drop his reſentment, and be happy to acknowledge him."

"Of that," reſumed Sir Charles, "I have no doubt. If he has the ſmalleſt degree of paternal regard for his daughter, it muſt be the caſe, and would be whether

he was taught to eſteem his ſon or not. When he had it in his power, he ſacrificed the happineſs of Somers that he might have his daughter's company; and for the ſame reaſon he will ſacrifice his reſentment."

"You put the worſt conſtruction on it," reſumed Sternhold, "that lays in your power; but if Somers is the man you deſcribe him to be, he will think differently."

By this time they arrived at the gate. Somers beheld Sternhold in company with Sir Charles, and was at a loſs to account for the motives of his viſit, yet concluded it would be no more than proper to meet him, and left the room for that purpoſe.

Sternhold requeſted a few minutes' converſation with him, and Somers deſired a ſervant to conduct him in.

Sir

Sir Charles pulled Somers by his ſleeve, "Do you know that old man?" ſaid he.

"Certainly," replied Somers; "it is Mr. Sternhold."

"I thought as much," reſumed Sir Charles; "faith, I have given him his leſſon; I have been telling him your father-in-law is a great rogue, and he appears half inclined to believe me. But now, Somers, remember what you have already ſuffered, and take my advice.—If he ſhould wiſh to heal the difference between you, by no means conſent to it; you will be far more happy in the company of Mrs. Somers when eſtranged from her family, than if ſhe were to continue their acquaintance. The old man cannot part with his daughter's ſociety; he will, therefore, ſacrifice his reſentment to obtain it."

"I ſhould hope," replied Somers, "when he witneſſes my conduct to Louiſa, he will be aſhamed that he has thus long perpetuated his reſentment. It is better to reform one man than to puniſh a thouſand. If Sternhold has an affection for his daughter, it is highly commendable, and is an ornament to human nature; would you then have me convert that amiable ſentiment he poſſeſſes into a puniſhment? Should a father be made to ſuffer for the affection he has towards his child, in the ſame manner he made me ſuffer for having an affection for my wife?—No.—However wrong his conduct may have been to me, I cannot return the ſame to him."

"Faith, Somers," rejoined Sir Charles, "you are not worthy to be called a man; you have no reſentment in you."

"What

"What ſhould I have to do with reſentment?" returned Somers; "it is an unpleaſant intruder, a painful gueſt; the human race would be far happier without it: excuſe me," ſaid he, "for a few minutes, Sternhold will think I neglect him."

CHAP. IV.

WHEN Somers approached the parlour where Sternhold had been conducted, he bowed reſpectfully.

"I troubled you with this viſit," ſaid Sternhold, "to requeſt you would explain your motives for taking away my daughter in the manner you did. Had you wiſhed for her ſociety, why did you not apply to me?"

"When I eſtimated your conduct for five years paſt," replied Somers, "I concluded ſuch a ſtep would be the moſt ineligible of any I could have purſued."

"It is plain," reſumed Sternhold, "you did not know me."

"Perhaps not," replied Somers; "but pardon

pardon me when I ſay, you poſſibly might not know yourſelf."

The converſation was here interrupted by the entrance of a ſervant, who announced Miſs Freeman and a lady.

Before Somers had time to anſwer the ſervant, Auguſta entered, followed by Louiſa and her child.

The moment Louiſa beheld him, ſhe ran and threw herſelf into his arms, exclaiming, "My dear, dear Charles!"

Somers preſt her to his heart, and kiſſed the tear as falling.

As ſoon as he could articulate a ſentence, "Ah, my God!" exclaimed he, "what a moment of ecſtacy is this!"

"Never, Charles," cried Louiſa, "never will I again be taught to leave you."

Somers now caught up his infant in his arms, and kiſſed it, while the tears of a

parent

parent bedewed its face; then turning to Louiſa for the purpoſe of introducing her to her father, "Mr. Sternhold," ſaid he.

"Do not mention any of my family," cried Louiſa. "It was through their advice I have been induced to neglect you."

Sternhold had been a ſilent ſpectator of this ſcene, nor had his daughter ſeen him.

When ſhe uttered this reproach, it ſtruck him forcibly. He came forward, "My children," ſaid he, "I have erred, but I hope it will not be too late—"

"Hold," cried Somers, interrupting him; "I cannot liſten to an apology from a father, nor does there need any.—If you ſhare in the joy the ſcene creates, it is all that I deſire."

"I can remember," reſumed Sternhold, "fifteen

"fifteen years back, when you were but a boy, and ſtood high in my eſtimation, I adopted you as my ſon; be now my ſon indeed:—you have my daughter, make her happy, and ſhare with her, her father's heart."

Louiſa now flew to her father and preſſed his hand, which he immediately joined to that of her huſband, while he ſent up a prayer that Heaven would bleſs them.

Sir Charles entered and obſerved this ſcene of reconciliation. "Thus it is," cried he, "that virtue is rewarded. You, Mr. Somers, who have of late ſo eminently ſtudied to render others happy, are now, if I may judge from your appearance, rendered completely ſo."

"This is a day," replied Somers, "I never expected to ſee.—Now I ſhall not only be happy myſelf, but ſhall have it in my

my power to make Louiſa ſo likewiſe, as I am aware the affection ſhe poſſeſſes for her parents is of that nature, ſhe could enjoy no ſolid ſatisfaction without having an opportunity of ſeeing them."

Auguſta congratulated both parties, as did Sir Charles, and thinking they would probably wiſh to ſpend the evening without interruption, they left them; the chaiſe being ſtill in waiting, conveyed them home.

Theodore now made his appearance, and was introduced by Somers to Mr. Sternhold and Louiſa; he was not within when Auguſta arrived, and on being informed ſhe was in the houſe, he kept out of the way on purpoſe to avoid her.

During the evening, hearing Mrs. Somers mention that ſhe expected Auguſta would viſit her the next morning, he made

made it his requeſt that ſhe would on no account acquaint either her or Sir Charles with his being at the lodge.

"If you particularly wiſh it," replied Louiſa, "I certainly will not; but I confeſs it rather ſurpriſes me that you ſhould have any fear on her account.

"She has frequently mentioned your name to me; and if I miſtake not, you ſtand high in her eſteem."

"I am infinitely obliged to her for her good opinion," rejoined Theodore; "but ſtill I have particular reaſons for making the requeſt, which I hope you will accede to."

"Undoubtedly," replied Louiſa; "you may depend upon me, although I feel greatly diſappointed in being debarred the pleaſure of communicating it to her, ſince I am confident, from the anxiety ſhe

teſtified

teſtified on your account, ſhe would be happy to know where you are."

"I do not doubt it," rejoined Theodore; "I ſtand indebted for one favour ſhe did me in town, and I preſume ſhe wiſhes to treat me in a ſimilar manner."

"Aſſure yourſelf," ſaid Somers, "here has been ſome miſtake. Miſs Freeman would not be guilty of ſuch deliberate cruelty. I ſhall take the firſt opportunity of ſpeaking to her concerning it, as it but ill accords with what ſhe once related to me."

On the following morning Sir Charles and Auguſta ſtrolled down to Cliffdown-lodge.

Louiſa and her father were walking in the garden, while Somers and Theodore were engaged in converſation in the houſe, and did not obſerve them enter.

Auguſta

Auguſta and Sir Charles joined Mrs. Somers and Sternhold, and purſued their walk till they reached the ſpot where ſtood the temple dedicated to ſolitude.

"What have we here?" cried Sternhold.

"To this place," replied Sir Charles, "your ſon uſed conſtantly to repair for the purpoſe of indulging his ſorrow.

"Here is where he ruminated on the cruelty of his father, and the neglect of his wife. Here I once detected him, and expoſed the folly of his conduct, which was preying on his life.

"It was at my inſtigation he ſent for Mrs. Somers, and to her I promiſed to reſtore the key, which I poſſeſſed myſelf of, leſt he ſhould again relapſe."

Sir Charles now produced the key, and Louiſa, having unlocked the door, entered,

accompanied

accompanied by her father, and followed by Sir Charles and Auguſta.

Sternhold ſurveyed the portraits, and peruſed the letters he had ſent to his daughter when ſhe formerly reſided with him. "Tis plain," ſaid he, "I have wonderfully wronged him; but ſuch was my inveteracy, I encouraged every one who ſpoke againſt him, and thought myſelf inſulted by thoſe who ventured to ſay a word in his behalf."

"It is the only reſource thoſe have," rejoined Sir Charles, "who delight in doing wrong; you were always happy in liſtening to his enemies, becauſe it accorded with your own feelings, and furniſhed you with a plea in your defence. Here," continued he, "on this chair he ſat, his head reclined upon his hand, his eyes ſurveying thoſe portraits, while he

ſought

ſought relief in the tears that ſtole down his cheek, and the fruitleſs ſighs that came from a heart oppreſſed."

Louiſa turned from this ſcene, and drew out her handkerchief to hide the grief its recital created.

Somers and Theodore, not knowing Sir Charles and Auguſta were in the garden, had come in purſuit of Louiſa and her father.

No ſooner did Somers behold the ſituation of Louiſa, and concluding from whence it originated, than he caught her in his arms and preſt her to his heart. "Theſe tears, my love," cried he, "afford a pleaſing aſſurance that I ſhall never again have occaſion to repair here as formerly."

Louiſa returned the preſſure, but her heart was too full to utter a ſentence.

During

During this ſcene, Sir Charles was attentively ſurveying Theodore. He did not till now know that he had returned, as he had always avoided him, and Somers had been deſired by him not to mention it.

Auguſta was covered with bluſhes, yet wiſhing to do away the unpleaſant opinion he entertained, "Give me leave to congratulate you," ſaid ſhe, "on your ſafe return to the protection of Mr. Somers. My couſin, Edward, will be happy to be informed of it, as he is extremely anxious on your account."

"I feel myſelf greatly obliged to you," replied Theodore, "as I certainly prefer the protection of Mr. Somers to that of St. Aubin, to whoſe kind care you ſo generouſly conſigned me." He then bowed

bowed reſpectfully to Sir Charles and Auguſta, and left them before ſhe had it in her power to articulate a reply.

Sir Charles recollected the ſuſpicions thrown out againſt Theodore by Sir Thomas, and although one of them had proved falſe, yet he concluded he had ſufficient reaſon to know that a part of the reſidue was true, at leaſt reſpecting his endeavouring to obtain the affections of his daughter.

He obſerved the bluſh that was viſible on his daughter's cheek when they met, as likewiſe the evident mortification ſhe betrayed on hearing Theodore's reply, and therefore as ſoon as he was gone, "Mr. Somers," ſaid he, "I think you are highly culpable in harbouring a young man you know ſo little of; and what has reached your knowledge does not in the leaſt

tend to his credit: you ſhould reſtore him to his friends, if he really has any; for my part, I do not think he has; but whether he has or not, they can be of no note, or he would not be permitted ſo tacitly to remain here."

Somers defended his young friend, as uſual, to the utmoſt of his ability, and concluded by declaring he ſhould not feel himſelf juſtified in delivering him over to his friends, or of witholding from him his protection.

"If that be your determination," reſumed Sir Charles, "it will deprive me of the pleaſure of ſeeing you here, as you muſt be aware, after what has been related to me, I cannot encourage his acquaintance in my family."

"I ſhould be ſorry," rejoined Somers, "to be debarred of your ſociety on his account;

account: he has been with me for ſome days, and has always avoided you; neither does he wiſh to be acquainted with any branch of your family; which is plain from his requeſting Mrs. Somers laſt night not to inform either you or Auguſta that he is here.

"He met you this morning by accident, not knowing you were in the garden, and you ſee he has taken the earlieſt opportunity of retiring. I will anſwer for it, he will be more cautious for the future."

Every word uttered by Somers, was felt in its full force by Auguſta. She would have given the world for an opportunity of ſpeaking with Theodore, and explaining how his miſtake had originated.

But, what with her father's ſuſpicions

and Theodore's miſconception, ſhe ſaw no proſpect of accompliſhing it.

From the firſt moment ſhe beheld him, when a priſoner at her father's, to the preſent period, her heart was unalterably fixed on him; and although from ſome miſrepreſentations that had taken place, ſhe had been driven to the neceſſity of treating him with cool civility, yet it was contrary to what her affection would have dictated; but when Freeman related the converſation he had with the Jew, and ſhe found from the letter ſhe received from Somers he was guiltleſs of the crime ſhe had attached to him, ſhe no longer looked on him in an unfavourable light, but permitted her affection to have its full weight . She felt extremely mortified that Somers ſhould likewiſe join with Theodore in his ſuſpicions againſt

againſt her, which ſhe concluded he did, from the partial promiſe he had juſt made to her father concerning Theodore; and this appeared the more aſtoniſhing, as ſhe had made to him a candid avowal of her ſentiments.

In this perplexing dilemma ſhe knew not what path to purſue.

At length it occurred to her, that by making Mrs. Somers a confidante ſhe ſhould be able, through her means, to explain away the miſtake, and for this intent ſhe beckoned to her.

Louiſa took the hint: "We will leave theſe gentlemen," ſaid ſhe, "to enjoy their own converſation for a few minutes, while we ſtroll round the garden."

When they were gone, Sir Charles recapitulated more fully his reaſons for not wiſhing to promote an acquaintance with

Theodore, and concluded by throwing out ſome unpleaſant ſuſpicions concerning his being an impoſter.

But Somers by his reply diſpelled his fears. He aſſured him, whatever might be Theodore's ſentiments, he was confident he would not trouble Auguſta with a repetition of them. And pledged his word that he ſhould not again intrude himſelf upon her company, unleſs it were conſented to or permitted by him.

Sir Charles, on this aſſurance, agreed to her viſiting Louiſa and himſelf as uſual; at the ſame time ſignifying that he ſhould place a firm reliance on his promiſe.

Auguſta had ſcarcely time to enter into an explanation with Louiſa, before Theodore made his appearance, and bowing reſpectfully, put a letter into her hand; having ſo done he departed, without

out giving her time to utter a ſentence. In fact, Auguſta was ſo much agitated on his ſudden appearance, and ſo much confuſed, that ſhe knew not what ſhe did.

"I declare," ſaid ſhe, "I am afraid to open this letter; what can it poſſibly contain?"

"Bleſs me, Miſs Freeman," ſaid Louiſa, "you tremble exceedingly, and are ſcarcely able to breathe. For Heaven's ſake, reſume your fortitude."

"I cannot get the better of my ſenſations," replied Auguſta; "do you open the letter and read it, for I am totally unable."

Louiſa obeyed, and read as follows:

'Madam,

'I have taken the liberty of troubling 'you with theſe few lines, being unwil- 'ling to intrude upon your company, 'fearing

'fearing leſt my heart ſhould rebel againſt
'my prudence, and I ſhould once more
'offend you by reſuming my former error,
'notwithſtanding the ſtrong reaſons you
'have given me to know that ſuch ſenti-
'ments would not be acceptable to you.

'When I conſider the unfavourable
'light in which I appeared to you on
'the road to London, I am not at a loſs
'to account for your ſeeking out St.
'Aubin, and giving him ſuch informa-
'tion as enabled him to trace me. Yet
'ſince I am confident you muſt now be
'aware I am not deſerving the cenſure
'you then laid on me, I hope I ſhall be
'permitted to remain here in ſafety, with-
'out dreading a ſimilar conduct on your
'part. I could wiſh, if poſſible, to re-
'move any cauſe you may have for ſuch
'a practice

'a practice in future; receive, therefore,
'my apology for having insulted you
'with my addresses, which arose from a
'confidence of what I am, and dictated
'by what I felt; but having suffered for
'my presumption, be assured, whatever
'pain it may cost me, I will not again re-
'peat them, as I am perfectly aware the
'inauspicious circumstances which intro-
'duced me to your house, would render
'it highly improper in me so to do.

'I sincerely hope you will not debar
'yourself the society of Mr. or Mrs. So-
'mers on my account, as it is not my
'intention to remain long here. In the
'mean time, that I may not give you
'offence, I will, although painful to re-
'late, and still more so to practise, stu-
'diously endeavour to avoid you; flatter-
'ing myself, this conduct on my part

'will ſo far enſure your eſteem, that I 'ſhall not again be put into the power 'of St. Aubin.

'I remain,

'Madam,

'Your moſt obedient,

'Theodore Somers.'

"What a cruel letter!" ſaid Auguſta; "I did not imagine Theodore could have uſed me thus. I certainly muſt anſwer it, and explain the circumſtance: his perſiſting in this error aſtoniſhes me. He might have been aſſured, if it were only on account of the friendſhip Mr. Somers poſſeſſed for him, I could not have been guilty of ſuch treachery."

"I think it will be improper for you to write," rejoined Louiſa. "If you will relate the cauſe from whence his ſuſpi-

cions

cions originate, I will take the firſt opportunity of recapitulating it to Mr. Somers, who will, no doubt, acquaint him."

Auguſta thanked her, and rehearſed the whole of what had paſſed between them from the commencement of their acquaintance; her accidental meeting of St. Aubin; the reply ſhe gave to ſome queſtions put to her in conſequence of Freeman having read the hand-bill; the ſingular way he was apprehended in London, and what the Jew had informed her couſin.

Sir Charles now approached, which put an end to the converſation; and after ſpending an hour with Mr. and Mrs. Somers, he returned with Auguſta to his houſe.

Sternhold ſpent the reſidue of the day at Cliffdown-lodge, and ſet off for Lon-

don early on the following morning to acquaint Mrs. Sternhold with the termination of his reſentment, and the conſequent happineſs of their daughter.

I ſhall now leave Somers to enjoy the ſociety of her he had ſo much languiſhed for, and to reconcile, if poſſible, the difference between Auguſta, Sir Charles, and Theodore, while I turn my attention to the long-abſent, but not forgotten, Clariſſa.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

WHEN Clariſſa reached town, in company with Theodore, ſhe took up her reſidence at the Glouceſter coffee-houſe, it being too late in the evening to think of ſearching for lodgings.

Clariſſa having retired to her chamber, had leiſure to ruminate on the paſt events.

Auguſta's letter had informed her of Mrs. Bentley's death. This was an afflicting circumſtance, and brought the tears into her eyes. She had been to her a ſecond mother. It conſiderably augmented her grief, when ſhe reflected her

her abſence had haſtened the awful period.

This naturally recalled to her a ſenſe of her ſituation.

Mrs. Bentley had no friend to whom ſhe could reſort for protection, and if ſhe had, and were ſtill living, ſhe knew not where to find them, as ſhe had retired in the country at an early age.

She knew that Mr. Somers would render her every aſſiſtance upon her application; as he had frequently ſignified his intention of becoming her protector on the deceaſe of Mrs. Bentley: yet he was ſtill but a young man, living ſeparate from his wife. She was aware that the malicious part of ſociety would make ſome unpleaſant remarks on it, and therefore determined on not adopting ſuch a plan.

Auguſta

Auguſta Freeman next preſented herſelf to her recollection.

She knew, notwithſtanding the letter ſhe had received from her, which originated in miſtake, that if ſhe waited on her, and recapitulated the circumſtance in its true light, ſhe could find in her a protector.

But then it occurred to her mind, that by purſuing ſuch a plan, it would appear as if ſhe wiſhed to throw herſelf in the way of Freeman; which would be highly improper, firſt, becauſe he had addreſſed her on the ſcore of marriage; and, ſecondly, as ſhe conceived he was the perſon who occaſioned her being taken from Mrs. Bentley's.

Theodore had offered his protection; but he was ſcarcely able to protect himſelf: neither would it be adviſable to accept

accept it, more particularly after what Auguſta had ſuggeſted in her letter, as by ſo doing it would afford means of cenſure. She even wiſhed ſhe had not taken up her reſidence at the ſame houſe for that night; but it was now too late to remedy the evil: yet ſhe determined on the following morning to ſeek for a lodging, and not acquaint him with the place.

With this intent ſhe aroſe early, and after walking through ſeveral ſtreets, obſerved on the window of a private houſe, a bill ſignifying a ſmall apartment was to be let furniſhed. Having knocked at the door, Clariſſa requeſted to ſee the room.

The woman replied, ſhe was afraid it would not ſuit her.

This reply was dictated from her appearance;

pearance; for although Clariſſa was not dreſſed in coſtly apparel, yet there was ſomething in her whole figure which indicated ſhe was above mediocrity, and therefore not likely to approve of ſo humble an apartment as ſhe had to diſpoſe of.

Clariſſa repeating her requeſt, ſhe was ſhown into a back room on the ſecond floor, and having declared it met with her approbation, the woman requeſted a reference.

Clariſſa had none to give, and therefore heſitated: ſhe aſſured her that ſhe might truſt her with ſafety in the houſe; that ſhe was at preſent an unfortunate character, but was able to pay for the room, as likewiſe to ſupport herſelf for ſome time.

The woman miſunderſtood her; ſhe knew

knew the term of "an unfortunate character" was generally adopted by those who get their bread by casual prostitution, and therefore replied, "I am sorry for it; I should not have thought as much from your appearance and address: I do not let my lodgings to any person who sees company."

Clarissa did not understand the technical term of "seeing company;" and therefore replied, "I assure you I see no company; I have not a friend in town, nor in the world, except one gentleman, and I do not expect he will visit London."

Clarissa knew not that this reply would be construed to her disadvantage; she was not aware that the name of 'friend,' was what an unfortunate character distinguishes the gentleman by who keeps her.

"To

"To be plain, madam," replied the woman, "I neither let my lodgings to thoſe who ſee company, or have been in keeping."

"Good Heavens!" ſaid Clariſſa, "what ſhould incline you to have ſo unfavourable a ſuſpicion of me? we certainly miſunderſtand each other."

An explanation now took place, and the woman having apologiſed, ſhewed her into a parlour, where Clariſſa, to ſatisfy her doubts, related the events that had brought her to London, and the death of her friend Mrs. Bentley, which deprived her of a protector.

Her recital was delivered with that innocent ſimplicity which always accompanies truth, mingled with the tears a recital of Mrs. Bentley's death had occaſioned,

ed, that gained the woman's commiſeration.

She requeſted her to ſit down and partake of her breakfaſt, during which time ſhe acquainted Clariſſa that her huſband was a hair-dreſſer, employed by a number of different ladies, and might poſſibly be able to obtain her a ſituation as a lady's maid.

Clariſſa replied, by aſſuring her ſhe ſhould be happy to meet with ſuch an employment; which, from the education beſtowed on her, ſhe was confident of filling with credit to herſelf.

The huſband ſhortly after made his appearance.

He was a father, and poſſeſſed a heart capable of feeling for the misfortunes of others.

The

The wife related a part of Clariſſa's ſtory, and aſked him if it would lay in his power to ſerve her.

The huſband promiſed to make every enquiry for ſuch a ſituation, and, in the mean time, thinking ſhe would be unpleaſantly ſituated in a lone room, offered to board her on moderate terms.

Clariſſa thankfully accepted the propoſal, and, being both worthy characters, ſhe enjoyed as much comfort in their ſociety as the diſtreſs of her mind, originating from the ſenſe of her ſituation, would permit.

She went on the following day to the Glouceſter coffee-houſe, for the purpoſe of deſiring the waiter to take in the letter for her, which ſhe expected in anſwer to the one ſhe had ſent to Somers on the evening ſhe arrived in town; at which place

ſhe

ſhe met Theodore, who requeſted ſhe would acquaint him with her reſidence.

Clariſſa refuſed, pointed out the impropriety of his viſiting her, and reminded him of Auguſta's letter, which ſo far ſatiſfied him as to put an end to his entreaty on the ſubject.

She went again the next day, and received the letter from Somers, with another encloſed for Theodore; but as he was not in the houſe at that time, ſhe could not give it him. In fact, he had that morning been taken by the three men before mentioned.

Clariſſa peruſed the contents of the letter from Somers to her with aſtoniſhment.

It declared that Freeman was not guilty. At firſt ſhe felt inclined to believe it; but when ſhe conſidered that the men had

had made uſe of his name; that Freeman's ſervant overtook her on the road ſhortly after ſhe had made her eſcape, and that he confeſſed he was in ſearch of her; when ſhe likewiſe reflected that Somers had not related who the perſon was that had cauſed her to be removed from Mrs. Bentley's; theſe circumſtances combined, made her doubt the truth of the letter.

She concluded Freeman had impoſed on Somers with a varniſhed tale, and had prevailed on him to requeſt her return, that he might have an opportunity of practiſing a conduct ſimilar to the former.

For this reaſon ſhe determined on not writing to Somers, as ſhe could receive no reply from him without giving her addreſs, which would fall into Freeman's hands,

and

and ſubject her to further inſult; and fearing leſt Somers ſhould have already informed him ſhe was at the Glouceſter coffee-houſe, ſhe reſolved not to venture there for the future, but left the letter encloſed to her for Theodore in the care of a waiter, deſiring him to deliver it.

A few days afterwards, as Clariſſa was ſitting at dinner, the hair-dreſſer at whoſe houſe ſhe reſided entered the room, and appeared much elated.

"I have heard," ſaid he, "of a ſituation which will exactly ſuit you."

Clariſſa enquired concerning it.

"This morning," ſaid he, "I was ſent for to dreſs Lady St. Aubin. It is a family that have juſt arrived in England from the Weſt Indies; her ladyſhip has no one to wait on her but a black ſervant ſhe brought over, and therefore will

ſtand

ſtand in need of your immediate attendance.

" Lord St. Aubin has been in England but two days; the firſt of which he ſpent at an hotel, while a furniſhed houſe was provided, which they entered laſt night; they cannot therefore have been able to hear of a ſervant as yet, and leſt they ſhould, I would have you loſe no time."

Clariſſa had put on black, in token of regard for the memory of Mrs. Bentley, and was therefore ſoon in readineſs. She aſked him if he had mentioned her name.

He replied, he had only ſaid he knew of a young lady who would be happy to accept of the ſituation, and that he would ſend her.

" If I ſhould be ſucceſsful," reſumed Clariſſa, " I will not paſs by the name of Clariſſa Leſley. I was born to figure in

a different ſphere. I had an uncle, who may be now living, but who I have not thought proper to apply to, as his conduct to my father was not the moſt affectionate; yet he would think himſelf diſgraced in having a relative in ſo humble a capacity. Another reaſon is, I ſhall not be ſo liable to be traced by the perſon at whoſe inſtigation I was conveyed from home; I will therefore take up the name of my deceaſed friend, 'Maria Bentley.'"

The hair-dreſſer approved of her caution, and giving her the addreſs of Lord St. Aubin, wiſhed her ſucceſs.

CHAP. VI.

CLARISSA purſued her way till ſhe eached a ſtreet in the neighbourhood of Groſvenor-ſquare, and having found the houſe, informed the porter of her errand, nd was ſhewn into a room.

Here ſhe waited for ſome time; at ngth a ſervant entered, and conducted r to Lady St. Aubin.

Her ladyſhip was in the act of wiping tear from her eye as Clariſſa entered e apartment.

Lady St. Aubin queſtioned her reſpect- g the abilities ſhe poſſeſſed.

Clariſſa informed her.

Lady St. Aubin aſked her to whom ſhe ſt apply for a recommendation.

Clariſſa replied ſhe was an orphan, and almoſt without a friend, having for ſome time paſt exiſted on the bounty of an officer's widow who had lately died.

That the only friend ſhe had was a gentleman who lived near Briſtol, and who could teſtify to the truth of her aſſertions; but that ſhe could have wiſhed not to apply to him, in conſequence of ſome unpleaſant circumſtances.

"Your appearance," ſaid Lady St. Aubin, "pleads greatly in your favour, but I do not feel inclined to take a perſon into my houſe without a reſpectable reference. What objection have you to receiving a character from the gentleman you mention?"

Clariſſa now felt herſelf neceſſitated to explain; ſhe therefore related the circumſtance of her being conveyed from home

the death of her friend in conſequence; her ſuſpicions of Freeman, notwithſtanding ſhe had received a letter from Mr. Somers to the contrary.

"Let me ſee the letter," reſumed her ladyſhip.

Clariſſa heſitated. She did not wiſh her name to be known; but taking it out of her pocket ſhe opened it, and folding the direction back, preſented the body of the letter for her peruſal.

Lady St. Aubin read the contents, and returned it into her hands: "You are unfortunately ſituated," ſaid ſhe; "I do not think it would be prudent to acquaint your friend Somers of your reſidence; therefore, as I approve of your appearance, and as an air of truth accompanies what you ſay, which is ſtrongly corrobo-

rated by the letter, I ſhall take you without enquiry.

The terms were immediately ſettled, and as Lady St. Aubin was in want of her attendance, ſhe promiſed to return in an hour.

Clariſſa occupied this vacant ſpace of time in viſiting the hair-dreſſer, and thanking them for the civilities ſhe had met with.

Before Clariſſa left them, ſhe requeſted that he would call at the Glouceſter coffee-houſe, and make ſome enquiries concerning Theodore; and if any letter ſhould be left for her, to take the earlieſt opportunity of forwarding it; but on no account to acquaint him of her reſidence, or the plan ſhe had adopted.

Having made this requeſt ſhe returned to Lady St. Aubin, who ſhe found, as before,

before, extremely unhappy. She aroſe on her entrance, and conducting her to the dreſſing-room, acquainted her with the attendance ſhe ſhould expect.

"You cannot, I preſume," ſaid Lady St. Aubin, "from the nature of your circumſtances, have obtained your clothes from the country?"

Clariſſa informed her ſhe had not, but that ſhe had purchaſed a ſufficient ſupply for the preſent.

Lady St. Aubin inſiſted on her accepting a complete change of apparel, and for this purpoſe opened a large trunk which had not been unpacked ſince ſhe left the Weſt Indies, and deſired her to take out the various articles it contained.

Clariſſa obeyed, and after ſhe had removed ſome of them, ſhe found a ſmall japanned box.

This ſhe took up by the handle on the lid, and was proceeding with it to a table, when the box, which was not locked, opened, and the contents fell on the floor.

Lady St. Aubin aſſiſted her in replacing the trinkets that lay ſcattered about: amongſt the reſt was a ſmall caſe: "I hope," ſaid ſhe, "this miniature is not injured," at the ſame time opening it. It is not hurt by the fall, but I think the damp from the ſhip has rather diſcharged the colour." Then putting it into Clariſſa's hand, "Do you not think," continued ſhe, "it appears mildewed?"

Clariſſa ſurveyed the portrait with evident marks of ſurpriſe depicted on her countenance.

Lady St. Aubin beheld it: "What is it," ſaid ſhe, "that thus aſtoniſhes you?"

"I have

"I have certainly," replied Clariſſa, "ſeen this portrait before, or the exact reſemblance of it, and ſet in the ſame manner."

"I ſhould ſcarcely think that poſſible," rejoined Lady St. Aubin: "it is the reſemblance of his lordſhip, and what he preſented to me before we were married."

"It is very ſingular," reſumed Clariſſa, "as the dreſs was the ſame, and a remarkable mole that is on the ſide of the face exactly correſponds with the miniature I ſaw."

"It muſt have been the effect of accident," reſumed Lady St. Aubin, "as there never was, to my knowledge, any copy of it taken, except when we went abroad.

"At that time his lordſhip had my

likeneſs taken, together with a copy of this, and left it in the poſſeſſion of his brother, that our poor loſt Frederick might have an opportunity of ſeeing them."

Here Lady St. Aubin again drew out her handkerchief to wipe away the tears that were falling from her eyes.

The reply of Lady St. Aubin occaſioned Clariſſa to proceed.

"At the time," ſaid ſhe, "that I was ſhewn the miniature, I was likewiſe ſhewn that of a lady, ſet in the ſame manner. The lady was dreſſed in blue, and on her head a turban cap."

"Aſtoniſhing!" cried Lady St. Aubin. "You muſt have ſeen the identical portraits. Are you acquainted with Mr. St. Aubin, his lordſhip's brother?"

Clariſſa replied in the negative.

At

At this juncture a ſervant informed her ladyſhip that Lord St. Aubin wiſhed to ſpeak with her.

She left the room, and in a few minutes Clariſſa was deſired to attend them.

"We are rather ſurpriſed," ſaid his lordſhip, "at what you have related concerning the miniatures; have the goodneſs to ſtate where you ſaw them, and in whoſe poſſeſſion."

"I was ſhewn them," replied Clariſſa, "by a young gentleman, who ſaid they were the reſemblance of his parents."

Lady St. Aubin was greatly agitated, and exclaimed, "It certainly was my unfortunate Frederick!"

Lord St. Aubin requeſted ſhe would compoſe herſelf; then turning to Clariſſa, "When did you laſt ſee this young gentleman?" ſaid he.

"A few days back," replied Clariſſa: "he came to town with me, and I left him at the Glouceſter coffee-houſe."

"You ſee, my lady," cried his lordſhip, "how wrong you are to let theſe trifling circumſtances thus oppreſs you."

"My lord," replied her ladyſhip, "you certainly forget what Sir William Leſley told you; why ſhould you have this high opinion of your brother?"

"Say nothing farther on that ſubject," reſumed his lordſhip; "Sir William ſpeaks only from ſuſpicion. You ſhould be careful not to wound the character of a man without foundation." Then addreſſing himſelf to Clariſſa, "Did the perſon," ſaid he, "tell you his name?"

"Theodore Somers," reſumed Clariſſa, "was the name I knew him by."

"It is all a miſtake," rejoined his lordſhip,

ſhip, " and I will anſwer for it my brother has the miniatures in his poſſeſſion."

He then waved his hand for Clariſſa to leave the room.

When Clariſſa had quitted them, ſhe ſat down to ruminate on what had fallen from the lips of Lady St. Aubin.

She had mentioned ſome perſon dear to her by the name of Frederick; called him loſt, and unfortunate.

She knew that Theodore Somers was only an aſſumed name; he frequently declared he had parents abroad; he had ſhewn her thoſe miniatures; he had fled from an uncle, and Lady St. Aubin threw out a ſuſpicion againſt the brother of his lordſhip.

While ſhe was thus comparing circumſtances, the houſe-keeper entered the room.

" My poor lady," ſaid ſhe, " is ſo unhappy

happy in conſequence of ſomething you have ſaid, that my lord cannot pacify her. It is reſpecting a miniature."

"Have you lived long in the family?" ſaid Clariſſa.

"Lord bleſs you!" replied the houſe-keeper; "I have lived with them ever ſince they were married."

"Then you can inform me," ſaid Clariſſa, "if they have a ſon?"

"Yes," replied the houſe-keeper; "that is what makes them ſo unhappy. Don't mention it to any one; he has turned out very wicked. But I'll tell you all about them; as you are now come into the family, it is fit you ſhould know."

The houſe-keeper then took a chair and ſitting down beſide her, began as follows:

"M

" My lord St. Aubin had as fair an eſtate left him, on the death of his father, as any nobleman could wiſh to have; but he turned out extremely wild, and ſpent a mint of money at gaming-houſes, ſo that he was obliged to mortgage his eſtates.

" When he married my lady, he had a large fortune with her, but not enough to pay his debts; nor did he go the way to work, but lived as extravagant as before, till my lady was brought to bed of a ſon, who they named Frederick.

" My lord then began to think ſeriouſly of the way he was going on. He was remarkably fond of the child, and for his ſake determined to live more prudent.

" For this purpoſe he retired into the country,

country, discharged several of his servants, and instead of being one of the most extravagant noblemen, he became one of the most saving; for he never parted with a guinea without looking at it half a dozen times.

"At this period his brother, who had been some years in the West Indies, returned to England.

"This brother, Mr. St. Aubin, had been to reside with a rich uncle, who was a great planter, and who had sent him back with a considerable sum of money, sufficient for him to commence merchant, and promised not only to consign the produce of his plantations to him, but to recommend him to other planters.

"Upon this foundation Mr. St. Aubin commenced

commenced merchant, and ſucceeded to his utmoſt expectations.

" About three or four years afterwards the uncle died.

" He divided his perſonal property amongſt various relations, leaving a conſiderable ſum to Mr. St. Aubin; but the whole of his plantations he bequeathed to his lordſhip.

" Theſe plantations, if ſold, would have produced more than ſufficient to pay off the mortgages on his lordſhip's eſtate; and as his brother was acquainted with their value, he conſulted with him about diſpoſing of them. But Mr. St. Aubin recapitulated the immenſe ſums of money that his uncle had gained by keeping them, and therefore ſtrenuouſly adviſed his lordſhip to ſend a perſon over, who ſhould look after them.

" This

" This converſation had great weight with his lordſhip, and having now grown as careful as he was before extravagant, he formed the reſolution of going over and reſiding there, for the purpoſe of accumulating wealth.

" For this intent he entruſted his brother with the management of his eſtates, leaving him to pay off the mortgages out of the rents he ſhould receive; and likewiſe, as he conſidered his ſon Frederick too young to ſuſtain the voyage, and as it was impoſſible he could receive ſo good an education there as in England, he left him alſo in his care, and ſailed in one of his brother's ſhips, taking his lady with him, and aſſuming the plain name of Frederick St. Aubin, thinking it rather degrading for a lord to be engaged in trade.

" He

" He ſhortly began to approve of the climate; and the large yearly produce he obtained from his plantations, which he conſtantly ſent over for his brother to diſpoſe of, inclined him to make a much longer ſtay than he otherwiſe intended; during which time he received every flattering account that a parent could wiſh concerning his ſon.

" At length, after remaining there upwards of fourteen years, he diſpoſed of the plantations to great advantage, and returned to England.

" Being anxious to behold their ſon, of whom they had received ſuch high encomiums, they immediately waited on Mr. St. Aubin. But judge how great their diſtreſs muſt have been, when he informed them, that Frederick had plunged into every vice; that he had obtained money

under

under various pretences from his uncle, which he loſt at the gaming-table; that he kept various women, and had at laſt robbed his uncle of ten thouſand pounds, and ſet off with a favourite girl to America.

"I thought," continued the houſekeeper, "my lady would have died on the receipt of this intelligence; but his lordſhip endeavoured to ſupport her ſpirits, by aſſuring her he would write to ſome friends he had in America, and deſire them to advertiſe him in the papers of the different ſtates, requeſting him to return, on his father's forgiveneſs; not doubting but he ſhould by theſe means hear of him.

"My lady then ſeemed more reconciled, and would have waited patiently; but Sir William Leſley, who has an ill

opinion

opinion of my lord's brother, has filled her mind with a thouſand ſuſpicions."

"Who is this Sir William Leſley?" ſaid Clariſſa.

"A very worthy gentleman," replied the houſe-keeper, "and has been intimately acquainted with my lord during the chief part of the time he reſided abroad. I have heard he was very poo when he firſt went over, having nothin but a ſmall annuity to live on; but h firſt became (what is there called) an a torney to ſome plantations; after whi he ſaved money and purchaſed ſome lan this gained him more; and being frug he amaſſed a tolerable fortune: but greateſt addition fell to him about months back, by the death of a relati on which he came to his title and a l eſtate in England.

"

" This made him determine to leave the Weſt Indies, and this it was that haſtened the departure of his lordſhip. But he too is very unhappy; he had a daughter in England, and juſt as he was preparing to ſail from the Weſt Indies, he received an account of her death."

A knocking was now heard at the ſtreet door.

" There is Sir William Leſley," continued the houſe-keeper: " he calls two r three times a-day, as my lord and he re very partial to each other's ſociety."

The houſe-keeper now went to attend e duties of her ſtation, and Clariſſa rened to the dreſſing-room, for the purſe of unpacking the trunk, and taking other view of the miniature.

CHAP. VII.

NO ſooner had Sir William Leſley entered, than Lady St. Aubin related the circumſtance of the miniatures as delivered by Clariſſa.

"It ſtrongly corroborates my ſuſpicions," rejoined Sir William: then turning to his lordſhip, "You muſt excuſe me," ſaid he, "for endeavouring to leſſen your brother in your eſtimation. I think he has not acted fairly by you. You know he is a penurious character, and they are not always the moſt honeſt."

"It would be a hard caſe indeed," replied his lordſhip, "if every penurious character were conſidered diſhoneſt."

"That

"That I admit," reſumed Sir William; "but when other circumſtances are brought to corroborate, it will afford ground for ſuſpicion.

"In the firſt place, you left an old and faithful ſteward to collect your rents, and account to your brother. This ſteward, you find, he has diſcharged many years back, and placed another in his ſituation; ſince which time your eſtates have not realiſed more than three-fourths of the ſum they uſed formerly to do.

"It is alleged by him the ſteward was impertinent; that the repairs have fallen heavy; and that ſeveral tenants eloped in debt.

"With reſpect to the produce of the plantations you have yearly ſent over to him, it has not netted more than three-fifths of what you expected, and what the

the crops of other planters had netted. In excuſe he pleads, damages ſuſtained, and the quality indifferent.

" With reſpect to the money it produced, as alſo the ſums yearly received from your eſtates after paying off the mortgages; he has bought and ſold in ſtock with it, by which one fourth is loſt. Unfortunately the ſtocks always got up a few days after he ſold out, which made him imagine they would riſe higher, and therefore he bought in again; and thus it is that you have loſt an immenſe ſum, either through his bad management or wickedneſs.

" Laſtly, reſpecting your ſon: there is a charge of five thouſand pounds, had at various times from him; which, he ſays, was ſquandered in extravagance. Why did he not acquaint you of this proceeding?

ing? But this ſum he might have given him at various periods; and he may plead, that he did not wiſh to wound your feelings.

"I ſhall therefore attend to the laſt charge: a groſs ſum of ten thouſand pounds, ſaid to be taken by Frederick.

"Let me aſk, where he took it from? Did he draw it from his banker's, or ſell it out of ſtock? What vouchers have you? what corroborative proofs does he bring to ſhow he loſt ſo large a ſum?—In fact, none. You are to rely merely on his word.

"Is it likely, if Frederick did poſſeſs himſelf of the ſum, that he ſhould fly his country? Who had he to fear? Did he dread an indulgent uncle? Is he not heir to all your property? Do you then think he would exile himſelf for a poor

ten

ten thouſand pounds? a ſum which is trifling, when compared to what you are worth.

"Give me leave to ſay, that if Mr. St. Aubin has been guilty of any nefarious practices reſpecting your eſtates and different freights, he would not ſtop at attempting to poſſeſs the whole, which, when Frederick is removed, he is heir to."

"You make me extremely uneaſy by theſe ſuſpicions," rejoined his lordſhip: "I ever conſidered my brother as a fair-dealing man, and one who ſtudied my intereſt."

"It is rather ſurpriſing," reſumed Sir William, "that you ſhould think better of your brother than you do of your own ſon. St. Aubin taught you to believe Frederick was all that is amiable: is it

not ſingular that he ſhould thus ſudden degenerate ?"

" It too frequently is the caſe," rejo ed his lordſhip ; " when young m arrive at a certain age, they become prey to their paſſions, which hurry the into exceſſes ; and my brother perhap through his affection for him, was n ſufficiently ſevere."

" It may be ſo," reſumed Sir William " but I ſhould, notwithſtanding, inve gate the intelligence further you ha received from your ſervant."

" I am of your opinion," rejoined La St. Aubin ; " ſhall I ſend for her ?"

" By all means," replied Sir Willia and ringing the bell, requeſted the tendance of Lady St. Aubin's woman.

Clariſſa entered.

Sir William ſat in his chair, attenti

ſurve

veying her, and then exclaimed in a
y tone, " My God! what a reſem-
nce!"

" What is it," ſaid Lady St. Aubin, in a
hiſper that could not be heard by Clariſſa,
" what is it that attracts your notice,
d throws you into this agitation?"

" Tell me," ſaid he, " the name of
at young lady."

" I really do not know it," replied her
dyſhip; " ſhe came here not an hour
nce, and I have been too much engaged
o think of aſking her." Then turning
o Clariſſa, " I forgot," ſaid ſhe, " to
nquire your name."

" Maria Bentley," replied Clariſſa.

Sir William ſighed. " I am not alto-
ether well," ſaid he; " will you per-
nit Miſs Bentley to fetch me a glaſs of
water?"

Clariſſa obeyed.

" Why are you thus agitated?" ſaid his lordſhip.

" Never," replied Sir William, " could there be a more ſtriking likeneſs than there is between that young lady and my deceaſed wife, for whoſe ſake I have thus long remained a widower. Such a perſon did my nightly dreams and waking thoughts prompt me to imagine I ſhould meet in my child; but death has robbed me of the chief happineſs for which I wiſhed to live."

" Do not think of it," reſumed his lordſhip; " you ſhould recollect it is paſt all remedy, and therefore ſhould ſupport yourſelf with fortitude."

" I have hitherto," replied Sir William, " endeavoured ſo to do; but Miſs Bentley recalled ſo forcibly to my memory the recollection

recollection of my misfortunes, that, for a moment, they unmanned me. I am now conſiderably better."

Clariſſa returned.

Sir William took ſome of the water, leſt ſhe ſhould think he had given her needleſs trouble.

Lady St. Aubin requeſted ſhe would relate what ſhe knew concerning the perſon who ſhe called Theodore Somers.

Clariſſa complied. She ſtated the forlorn ſituation in which Theodore was at the time Somers firſt beheld him, which ſhe was enabled to do from the information of Auguſta.

She then drew a picture of the benevolent character of Somers, who relieved his diſtreſs, and took him into his houſe.

"How is this!" cried Lord St. Au-

bin: "I conceived this Theodore was a relation of Mr. Somers, as he bore the ſame name."

"That name," rejoined Clariſſa, "Mr. Somers gave him, as he refuſed to divulge his own.

"Theodore Somers," continued ſhe, "declared he had parents abroad, whom he ſhortly expected home; that he had been obliged to fly from an uncle, in whoſe protection he had been left, but who had abuſed his truſt."

"Now, my lord," cried Sir William, "what think you of this circumſtance? and add to this, he was in poſſeſſion of your miniatures."

"It is ſingular!" replied his lordſhip: "but I will thank the young woman to proceed. Let me know," continued he, "how you became acquainted with him."

"I was

" I was taught, my lord," replied Clariſſa, " to expect a higher lot than what I long have moved in.

" I never knew a father; he left England before I was born; nor could I know my mother, as ſhe died ſhortly after I was brought into the world.

" My father ſent money yearly for my ſupport, by which means I received a tolerable education."

" What a remarkable ſimilarity of circumſtances!" ſaid Sir William to his lordſhip.

" Mere matter of chance," ſaid his lordſhip: then turning to Clariſſa, " What became of your father?" ſaid he.

" He loſt what he had gained, by venturing too much," replied Clariſſa; " and it was ſuppoſed he died, as the gentle-

man with whom I was left in truſt never heard from him after.

" From this I date my misfortunes: it was not in the power of this gentleman to ſupport me, and an officer's widow, who he had ſelected to finiſh my education——"

" God of heaven!" cried Sir William, ſtarting from his chair and ſtriking his hand upon his forehead while he walked about the room.

Lord St. Aubin went to him: " You certainly forget yourſelf," ſaid he; " why do you ſuffer ſuch trifles thus to unman you?"

" I cannot help it," replied Sir William. " I beg your pardon for this interruption; requeſt Miſs Bentley to proceed."

" This

" This lady," reſumed Clariſſa, " provided for me out of her widow's penſion, and we lived in the neighbourhood of Mr. Somers.

" Illneſs greatly reduced her circumſtances, and I took in needle-work to aſſiſt in ſupporting us.

" Mr. Somers knew our poverty, and conſtantly relieved us. He heard my ſtory, and would not permit me to continue my employment, but ſupplied every want I had, and promiſed to be my protector."

" That Somers," cried Sir William, " is a worthy character, and I ſhall eſteem him as long as I live.

" You are now, Miſs Bentley, a child of charity; I will be to you a more than protector; a friend—a father."

Clariſſa, at the mention of that endear-

ing name, drew out her handerchief to wipe away the tears that ſtarted in her eyes.

Lord St. Aubin looked at Sir William with evident aſtoniſhment.

" It is even ſo," continued Sir William; " I cannot help my feelings, it will afford me unſpeakable ſatisfaction."

Clariſſa teſtified her gratitude for his offer, and aſſured him it ſhould be the ſtudy of her life to merit his favour.

Lady St. Aubin congratulated her on the promiſe ſhe had received, and then requeſted ſhe would proceed.

Clariſſa ſtated how ſhe became acquainted with Theodore, his being apprehended in conſequence of the hand-bill, together with all the attendant circumſtances: his affection for Miſs Freeman; his frequent declaration that he

he ſhould one day be able to prove himſelf upon an equality with her family; and concluded with the cauſes that brought both himſelf and her to London.

When Clariſſa had finiſhed, "I will go," ſaid Lord St. Aubin, "to the Glouceſter coffee-houſe immediately, in ſearch of this Theodore Somers."

"It will be of no uſe," rejoined Clariſſa. "When I went to fetch the water for Sir William, the man who had adviſed me to apply for this ſituation was waiting to ſpeak with me.

"I ſent a ſervant for the water; in the mean time he informed me, that he had enquired for Theodore, conſiſtent with my requeſt; but that he had not been there ſince I left the letter."

"That

"That is unfortunate," rejoined his lordſhip.

"Had I not better go for the letter?" reſumed Clariſſa. "It may ſerve to throw a light upon the buſineſs; and, if not, it will convince your lordſhip that what I have related is not a fiction."

"I have no doubt of its authenticity," replied his lordſhip; "but I ſhould wiſh, notwithſtanding, to ſee the letter. I will order the carriage for you."

Clariſſa replied, that ſhe ſhould be back again before the carriage could be got in readineſs, and therefore declined it.

When Clariſſa left the houſe, ſhe had an opportunity of peruſing a letter which the hair-dreſſer had brought, and which was left by Freeman at the Glouceſter coffee-houſe.

This

This letter contained ſuch an avowal of his innocence reſpecting her, that ſhe felt ſtrongly inclined to believe it; and, by the time ſhe had reached the coffee-houſe, had come to a determination of writing to Auguſta, by way of reply.

When ſhe entered the houſe, ſhe was ſurpriſed on meeting Freeman.

He had, in conſequence of Somers informing him ſhe was to be heard of at that place, offered five guineas to the waiter if he could trace her; therefore, when the hair-dreſſer called to enquire concerning Theodore, and if a letter had been ſent for Clariſſa, the waiter followed him, and obſerving him enter the houſe of Lord St. Aubin, he remained in the ſtreet while he ſhould deviſe a plan to find out if ſhe was there.

It occurred to him that he might knock at the door and aſk for a fictitious name.

The porter anſwered the knock, and while the waiter was tiring him with queſtions, he beheld Clariſſa coming down the ſtairs. This was ſufficient, he inſtantly returned, and diſpatched a letter to Freeman, who, the moment he heard Clariſſa had been traced, viſited the coffee-houſe, to pay the reward and obtain the information.

The waiter had but that minute informed him, when Clariſſa entered.

She ſtarted back on obſerving him, and was going to retire, but he detained her: ſhe then upbraided him with his conduct, which he in return denied; and having produced the letter Somers had ſent him, it perfectly ſatisfied her of his innocence.

She

She apologiſed for her ſuſpicions; but alleged it would be out of her power to ſee him again.

"Not ſee me!" cried Freeman; "how can you be thus deliberately cruel? I will wait on Lady St. Aubin, as I underſtand you have ſought her protection: I will explain to her my wiſhes, and ſhe will ſurely plead in my behalf."

Clariſſa was ſurpriſed he ſhould have heard where ſhe was ſituated in ſo ſhort a time.

"Her ladyſhip will not ſee you," replied ſhe, "as I informed her it was through your means I was taken from home."

"Then it is neceſſary," rejoined Freeman, "that I ſhould viſit her, if it be only to vindicate my character, and I will poſitively attend you back."

Clariſſa

Clariſſa found that all reſiſtance would be uſeleſs, Freeman declared he would accompany her; ſhe therefore aſked for the letter, and, as ſhe was returning, acquainted him with her having aſſumed the name of Maria Bentley. "I ſhould not wiſh," continued ſhe, "to be detected in a falſity; ſome few days hence, perhaps, I may take an opportunity of explaining to them the reaſons that made me ſhelter myſelf under a borrowed name."

Freeman aſſured her ſhe might rely on him.

Clariſſa next acquainted him with the generous offer made by Sir William Leſley.

"Who is this Sir William Leſley?" cried Freeman: "I would have you beware how you accept the protection of a ſtranger.

ſtranger. By Heaven! no one ſhall protect you but myſelf. It is very ſingular, indeed, that a man you never beheld till this afternoon ſhould thus voluntarily offer his ſervices. You do not know the world, Clariſſa," continued he: "there is ſome improper motive couched under this maſk of generoſity."

"Hold!" ſaid Clariſſa; "you are injuring a worthy character: I am confident his offer proceeds from the beſt of motives."

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

BY this time they had reached the houſe.

Clariſſa requeſted he would not accompany her in; but Freeman lent a deaf ear to her entreaty, and when the porter opened the door, he deſired him to ſend a ſervant with his name to Lady St. Aubin, requeſting a few minutes' audience.

Clariſſa, finding all ſhe could ſay was of no uſe, haſtened to her ladyſhip with the letter, and acquainted her with meeting Mr. Freeman, who had inſiſted on attending her home. "He is now waiting in the hall," continued ſhe, "to ſpeak with your ladyſhip."

"What

"What can he poſſibly want with me?" rejoined her ladyſhip. "If he has acted in the manner you mentioned, I will not ſee him."

"Is it the ſame man," ſaid Sir William, "to whom you ſtand indebted for your journey to London?"

"I charged it to his account," replied Clariſſa; "but he pleads innocent, and brings ſtrong corroborative proofs to ſhow that he is ſo."

The ſervant now entered with Free man's meſſage.

"If your ladyſhip will admit him, you will oblige me," ſaid Sir William, "as wiſh to ſpeak with him."

Lady St. Aubin deſired the ſervan would conduct him up ſtairs.

Freeman entered, but was ſurpriſed ſeeing two gentlemen with her ladyſhip

Lady St. Aubin roſe on his entering the room, and introduced him.

"I underſtand," ſaid Sir William, "you wiſh to ſpeak with her ladyſhip concerning Miſs Bentley. I have promiſed to be her father, and upon this promiſe ſhe has agreed to accept of my protection; therefore, if you have any thing to advance, I am the only perſon you can apply to."

Freeman then related the unpleaſant ſuſpicion ſhe had harboured of him, and produced the letter from Somers to prove how unfounded thoſe ſuſpicions were.

He next, in an animated ſtyle, diſplayed the attachment he had for her, and the painful anxiety he had ſuſtained during her abſence.

"I ſhall ſhortly," continued he, "obtain my father's ſanction for my proceedings; after which, it is my wiſh that ſhe

ſhe will conſent to ſhare my name and fortune."

"Who is your father?" rejoined Sir William.

Freeman replied, by informing him of his family and connections.

"If you are related to Sir Charles Freeman," ſaid his lordſhip, "you can perhaps give me ſome information reſpecting Theodore Somers."

"I had the pleaſure of being acquainted with the gentleman you mention," replied Freeman; "and will give your lordſhip every information in my power."

"Firſt," ſaid Sir William, "I will anſwer you reſpecting the buſineſs you came upon. I ſhall, in return for the handſome and diſintereſted offer you have made, take the earlieſt opportunity of conſulting Miſs Bentley. If ſhe approves,

and

and you obtain the conſent of your father, I will endeavour to beſtow a fortune on her, ſuitable, perhaps, to the expectations of your family."

"I feel myſelf greatly obliged to you, for your generous intentions," replied Freeman; "but I want no fortune with her; my affection is not dictated by mercenary motives; to have the happineſs of calling Miſs Bentley mine is all I deſire."

"This ſentiment of yours," reſumed Sir William, "elevates you in my eſtimation; but ſince I have promiſed to be a father to her, I ſhall conſult my own dignity on the occaſion: ſhe ſhall not enter your family in the light of a pauper. And now, ſir," continued he, "you will oblige us by relating what you know of the young gentleman."

Freeman

Freeman began with the origin of their acquaintance, and continued till he mentioned the circumſtance of his meeting a Mr. St. Aubin.

"What St. Aubin?" cried his lordſhip; "who is he?"

"A merchant in the city," replied Freeman, "that I accidentally met at Mrs. Seaton's, my aunt."

"I begin to fear," ſaid his lordſhip, turning to Sir William, "that your ſuſpicions were not altogether unfounded."

Freeman next related the charge that Mr. St. Aubin exhibited againſt Theodore, of his taking a ſum of money and the two miniatures from his employer, who brought him up as a child of charity.

"This ſtory," continued Freeman, "carries a contradiction on the face of

it; for when Theodore ſupplicated the benevolence of my friend Somers, his ſhoes were nearly worn from his feet; he had not a ſhilling in his poſſeſſion, and offered to accept a menial office, as he was literally in want of bread at the time he had the miniatures in his poſſeſſion. If theſe were not the reſemblance of his parents, why did he not diſpoſe of them, or of the diamonds with which they were ſet? It ſhews the high veneration he had for them, and ſtrongly corroborates his own teſtimony."

Lady St. Aubin burſt into tears: "It was certainly my poor loſt Frederick!" ſaid ſhe. "What has not St. Aubin to anſwer for, in thus perſecuting my child who was left in his protection; he never knew what it was to be a parent!"

"How is this!" cried Freeman, aſtoniſhed.

niſhed. " Is it poſſible that Theodore Somers can be your ſon?"

" I am afraid," rejoined his lordſhip, " it is too true."

Freeman approached Lady St. Aubin: " Compoſe yourſelf," ſaid he; " Theodore is ſafe, and ſomewhere under the protection of his friend, Mr. Somers."

" Ah!" cried his lordſhip, " tell me quickly what reaſon you have for ſo ſaying."

Freeman proceeded. He related the circumſtance of Theodore being taken by the men in the preſence of Auguſta; his own ſuſpicions; his waiting on the Jew in conſequence, and the converſation that paſſed.

" What Jew is that?" ſaid his lordſhip.

" His name," replied Freeman, " is Iſaac Solomon; and if I may judge from what he told me, he poſſeſſes the heart of a Chriſtian."

" You have been impoſed on," ſaid his lordſhip: " I have heard of the fellow; he is the man who tranſacts my brother's buſineſs—if a brother he may be called. Solomon would not venture to loſe his favour by reſcuing my unfortunate boy."

" I beg your lordſhip's pardon," ſaid Freeman; " I am inclined to think otherwiſe: he it was that led me to ſuſpect Mr. Somers knew of Theodore, which prompted me to write to him, and I received this in reply."—

Freeman now read that part of the letter from Somers which aſſured him that Theodore was ſafe, but in ſecreſy.

" If,"

"If," ſaid his lordſhip, "Theodore is really my ſon, I know not how I ſhall be able to reward Mr. Somers for his humanity."

"He poſſeſſes," reſumed Freeman, "ſufficient for all the comforts of life; and you would wound his feelings by a propoſal of that nature. It will amply repay him to know he has been the means of rendering a fellow-creature happy."

"You have ſo far rouſed my feelings, and excited my curioſity, by this relation reſpecting Theodore," reſumed his lordſhip, "that I will take the earlieſt opportunity of viſiting Mr. Somers: but firſt I will ſee St. Aubin. It is now too late to call on him, as he has no doubt gone to his country houſe, where I underſtand he ſleeps every night; but I will be with

him to-morrow, and try if I can diſcover in his countenance any token of guilt."

"If I may be allowed to adviſe," rejoined Freeman, "it is, that you would firſt viſit the Jew."

"By no means," replied his lordſhip; "that Jew would put St. Aubin on his guard. Reſt aſſured, wherever a Jew is concerned, there is ſome nefarious practice at the bottom."

Sir William joining with his lordſhip, Freeman's advice was overruled.

Clariſſa was now preparing to leave the room; but Lady St. Aubin approached her, and taking her hand, "You muſt not leave us," ſaid ſhe; "you are now the adopted daughter of Sir William: I ſhall be proud to place you amongſt the number of my friends:" and then inſiſted on her

her taking a chair beſide her, which Clariſſa, in conſequence of her importunity, was obliged to accept.

Lord St. Aubin deſired Freeman would ſpend the evening with him, and Sir William at the ſame time joining in the requeſt, he readily conſented, flattering himſelf he ſhould have an opportunity of paſſing a few moments with Clariſſa unaccompanied by her friends, as his heart overflowed with an ecſtaſy he wiſhed to relate. But no ſuch opportunity offered; each were too deeply engaged in their enquiries reſpecting Theodore; his manner, addreſs, accompliſhments of perſon, and underſtanding: to all which enquiries Freeman gave ſuch anſwers as raiſed their expectations to the higheſt pitch.

At the hour of twelve Freeman took his leave, and returned to his aunt's.

He concluded Auguſta would have retired to reſt, as ſhe intended ſetting off early on the following morning with Mrs. Somers for Cliffdown-lodge; but expected to find Mrs. Seaton up, to whom he intended relating the ſucceſs he had met with.

When he entered the room he was ſurpriſed on beholding his father, as he had no ſuſpicion of his being in town.

Freeman, who was at all times happy to ſee him, ran towards him to teſtify the pleaſure this unexpected meeting afforded; but was checked by the unuſual ſeverity that appeared in his countenance.

"Firſt," ſaid his father, "anſwer me, what is it that has occaſioned your viſit to town?—Is it true, that you have come to a determination of introducing

ducing a miſerable cottager into my family?"

Freeman was confounded at the ſtern manner in which his father addreſſed him, and could not articulate a reply; but heſitated.

"It will be of no uſe to deny it," reſumed his father; "I have received a letter from my brother, Sir Charles, informing me of the whole particulars; and my ſiſter has likewiſe, conſiſtent with her duty to me and affection for you, acquainted me with what has come to her knowledge. You will therefore render yourſelf more deſerving of my favour by a candid confeſſion than by prevarication or denial. I promiſe you I will attend to any thing you can plead in extenuation of your folly."

Freeman replied to the charge, that he

had always taught him to believe he ſhould be left to the free and unbiaſſed exerciſe of his judgment in the choice of a partner.

He then deſcanted on the merits of Clariſſa, and related the ſtory he had learnt from Somers; concluding with the adventure of the evening, and Sir William Leſley having adopted her.

This relation in ſome meaſure pacified the father. "I ſhall viſit this nonpareil," ſaid he, "and ſhall likewiſe have ſome converſation with Sir William. Pray, is he related to her? The name being the ſame, and your aſſertion that ſhe ſprings from an ancient family in the north of England, who I am diſtantly acquainted with, together with a combination of circumſtances, prompts the enquiry."

"I do not believe they are related," replied

replied Freeman; "but you will oblige me by mentioning the circumſtances you allude to."

"I knew a Sir Henry Leſley," reſumed the elder Freeman. "He had only one brother, and to the beſt of my recollection, his name was William.

"This brother went over to the Weſt Indies, leaving his wife pregnant, who was ſhortly after delivered of a daughter, and died.

"This circumſtance of Miſs Leſley ſo far correſponding, induced me to put the queſtion."

"Her father," rejoined Freeman, "has been dead for ſome years: they may, notwithſtanding, be diſtantly related; but it has been out of the power of Sir William to inveſtigate it, as ſhe, to avoid the perſon who conveyed her from home, has

taken up the name of Maria Bentley, by which name only ſhe is known to him."

"She muſt explain that circumſtance," reſumed the father: "the name of Leſley not being common in the North, it may poſſibly turn out as I ſuſpect."

Freeman ſignified his intention of viſiting Clariſſa in the morning, and requeſted his father would do him the favour to accompany him.

This being agreed upon, they retired to reſt.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

ON the following morning, after breakfaſt, Sir William taking Clariſſa by the hand, "Miſs Bentley," ſaid he, "I wiſh to have a few minutes' converſation with you."

Having adjourned to another apartment, "From the firſt moment I beheld you," continued he, "I felt for you the affection of a parent. As your mother was left, ſo did I leave my wife; as your mother died, ſo died my poor Clariſſa; as you were left in truſt, and to the care of a gentleman, ſo was my child left, and juſt ſuch a daughter as you appear did I fondly hope to meet on my return to England:

land: but death has deprived me of that happineſs.

" The ſimilarity of theſe circumſtances, together with the ſtrong reſemblance your features bear to her's who ſhared my heart, and whoſe memory muſt be ever dear to me, account, perhaps, in part for the ſenſations I felt when I firſt beheld you, and for the promiſe I have made.

" I am now going to fulfil a part of that promiſe, by conſulting your happineſs. Mr. Freeman, if the account he gives of his family and fortune be correct, is ſo far unexceptionable. But you are now to take into your conſideration, that you are the daughter of Sir William Leſley, and not an unprotected orphan; do not therefore permit his ſituation in life to have the ſmalleſt weight with you. If he really has an intereſt in your heart,

take

take him; but if not, the fortune I am able, and will beſtow on you, ſhall be a ſufficient recommendation, and ſuch as will entitle you to expect his equal.

"Having made the preliminary obſervations, anſwer me, in return, one queſtion with candour.

"Is Mr. Freeman the object of your choice?"

Clariſſa bluſhed and heſitated.

"If I may judge," continued Sir William, "from the confuſion betrayed in your countenance, he certainly is. But why are you afraid to ſpeak to me? What can I ſay, or what act can I do, that will teach you to look upon me as your father?"

"Oh, Sir William," rejoined Clariſſa, "my heart is almoſt too full for utterance!

ance!—You oppreſs me by your abundant generoſity!"

"Generoſity!" cried Sir William; "what a ſentiment is that!—Are you not my daughter?"

"Oh Heaven!" exclaimed Clariſſa, burſting into tears; "you teach me by your goodneſs the loſs I have ſuſtained in the death of my parent!—but which loſs you amply replace."

"It ſhall be the ſtudy of my life ſo to do," rejoined Sir William. "I cannot endure that you ſhould look upon me as your benefactor. I hope to merit a far more endearing title; therefore, anſwer my queſtion as you would anſwer your father."

Clariſſa, oppreſſed with the kindneſs manifeſted by Sir William, felt aſhamed that

that ſhe ſhould have impoſed on him with a borrowed name, and was firſt preparing to ſolicit his forgiveneſs for ſo doing, when the names of Freeman ſenior and junior were announced; and Lady St. Aubin entered the room to aſk if Sir William would ſee them.

"By all means," replied Sir William: then turning to Clariſſa, "You have not anſwered my queſtion," ſaid he.

"There is no occaſion," replied Clariſſa, "your penetration has diſcovered all I had to tell you."

"Why then," cried Sir William, "Freeman and you ſhall be one, if my fortune be able to procure it."

Clariſſa ventured to preſs his hand, while the tears that ſtood in her eyes betokened the feelings of a grateful heart.

Sir

Sir William returned the preſſure :— " Come, child," ſaid he, " you muſt go with me ; " I will ſhew Freeman's father what an amiable daughter I have to preſent him."

Clariſſa accompanied him.

Lord and Lady St. Aubin were in converſation with the younger Freeman, and would have withdrawn ; but Sir William prevented them.

" I waited upon you," ſaid the elder Freeman, " at the particular requeſt of my ſon, and in conſequence of a converſation that took place between you yeſterday evening reſpecting a young lady, who, he informs me, is under your protection."

" I have not only taken Miſs Bentley under my protection," rejoined Sir William, " but——"

" I beg

" I beg your pardon," ſaid the elder Freeman, interrupting him, " the young lady's name is not Bentley."

" Permit me," ſaid Freeman, " as I am acquainted with the circumſtance, to inform Sir William.

" That young lady, who paſſes for Miſs Bentley, is deſcended from a titled family, and thought ſhe might give an offence to ſome branch of it if ſhe entered into a ſtate of ſervitude in her own name; ſhe further imagined I had treated her improperly, and therefore, to ſcreen herſelf the more effectually from my knowledge, aſſumed the name of Maria Bentley. My father wiſhes this circumſtance to be explained, as he conjectures there may be a relationſhip exiſting between you."

" I ſhould be happy to find it ſo," rejoined

joined Sir William. My family is not extenſive, and if you will rehearſe the grounds you have for ſuch conjecture, I ſhall be able no doubt to ſatisfy you."

Freeman began by relating what Somers had informed him; but when he came to that part wherein he obſerved ſhe was left in the care of a Mr. Morris—

"Heavenly God!" cried Sir William, "whither would you lead me!—Morris!—With a perſon of that name I left my wife, and afterwards to his care aſſigned my daughter."

Then haſtening to Clariſſa, and taking hold of her hand, "Tell me, child," ſaid he, "and eaſe this diſtracting ſtate of ſuſpenſe, who are your relations, and what is your name?"

Clariſſa, who was feelingly alive to what had paſſed, was ſcarcely able to articulate

articulate a reply, till recovering herſelf, "My uncle was Sir Henry Leſley," ſaid ſhe: "I am Clariſſa Leſley."

"Now I am indeed a parent!" cried Sir William; and, unable to ſuſtain his feelings, ſunk on a chair.

Lord St. Aubin ran to his aſſiſtance.

"I ſhall be better in a minute," ſaid Sir William faintly: "where is my daughter?—let me fold her to my heart!"

Clariſſa, whom this event had for a minute deprived of ſenſe and motion, and who was ſupported by Lady St. Aubin and Freeman, began to revive.

"Compoſe yourſelf," ſaid Freeman; "Sir William is your father!—let me conduct you to him."

Clariſſa, by his aſſiſtance, threw herſelf upon her father's neck, while Sir William preſt

preſt her to him, and ſpent a moment in unutterable felicity.

But Clariſſa nearly relapſing again, Lady St. Aubin prevailed on her to quit the room, while ſhe endeavoured to regain her ſpirits.

" Father of Mercies!" cried Sir William, and lifting up his eyes towards Heaven, " how wonderful is thy providence!"

" Wonderful indeed!" rejoined Lord St. Aubin. " Had not your daughter been taken from her home in the country, which has given her ſo much uneaſineſs, it is probable ſhe never would have known a father, or you have been bleſſed with a daughter: and thus it is, while we are too frequently lamenting our lot, and complaining againſt the ſeverity of fate,

fate, our Creator is imperceptibly leading us on to happineſs."

"To happineſs indeed!" rejoined Sir William. "To find my daughter ſtill in exiſtence, who I was taught to believe was dead, is a pleaſure I could not have expected. But what could induce Morris to act upon this principle? It is to me aſtoniſhing. I regularly ſent him over remittances more than ſufficient for her ſupport and education, which remittances I have his letters to acknowledge the receipt of."

"I judge how it is," ſaid Lord St. Aubin: "you informed me, on the firſt day you landed, on enquiring for him you heard he had failed ſome years back; ſince which time, depend upon it, he has found it neceſſary to keep the money for his own uſe, reſting ſatisfied ſhe would find

find a protectreſs in the officer's widow. This is what made him acquaint your daughter that you were no more; and being aſhamed to meet you after thus betraying his truſt, fearing likewiſe leſt you ſhould diſcover the villany of his conduct and puniſh him, when he gained intelligence of your coming to England, he informed you ſhe was dead."

"His lordſhip is certainly right," rejoined the elder Freeman; "but how deliberately cruel muſt that man's heart be, who could thus expoſe your daughter to want! I would find him out, and make him ſuffer for his conduct."

"As my daughter is thus happily reſtored," replied Sir William, "I ſhall take no coercive ſteps againſt him; but leave him to receive his puniſhment from a higher power."

This

This converſation was put an end to by the entrance of Clariſſa, who again threw herſelf into the arms of her father.

Freeman next approached to congratulate her.

"Mr. Freeman," ſaid Sir William, "I have had ſome converſation with my daughter concerning your propoſal; but I cannot obtain a reply in your favour."

Freeman appeared diſconcerted, and ſent a petitioning look towards Clariſſa; who anſwered with a ſmile, at the ſame time preſſing his hand, which was joined to hers.

"I hope you are wrong," rejoined Freeman; "I can read no diſapprobation in her countenance."

"Perhaps," reſumed Sir William, "you can plead better in your own behalf than I can plead for you; I ſhall therefore

give you permiſſion to prefer your ſuit, not doubting but your father will approve your conduct."

"I know not why I ſhould diſapprove," rejoined the elder Freeman: "I came here this morning for the purpoſe of giving it my ſanction, when I did not know to what family the young lady belonged: reſt aſſured I ſhall be proud and happy in the alliance."

Lord St. Aubin now requeſted they would excuſe him, as he had waited rather beyond the time he expected his brother would arrive in town. I ſhall therefore leave the party to the enjoyment of each other's company, while I attend his lordſhip.

He did not wait for his carriage being got in readineſs, but purſued his way on foot.

When

When he reached the houſe a ſervant was anſwering a perſon at the door, and would have conducted him, but his lordſhip ſaying there was no occaſion, he was ſuffered to proceed alone, and entered a room where he had been the day before.

Finding no perſon in this room, and hearing his brother's voice in an adjoining apartment, he was preparing to enter it, but was prevented in conſequence of ſome words that reached his ear; he therefore placed himſelf by the door, while he attended to the following converſation:

"Are you certain," cried St. Aubin, "the ſhip has ſailed?"

"Poſitive," replied Iſaac Solomon.

"Why then he is ſafe enough," rejoined St. Aubin; "and as my brother has no ſuſpicion, all will be well."

" I varrant he iſh ſhafe," rejoined the Jew; " I ſaw de young ſhentleman put into de hold; he vill ſoon find his vay to Africa."

" Did you tell the maſter of the veſſel," reſumed St. Aubin, " that he was a wild, extravagant fellow, and ſometimes deranged in his mind?"

" Yeſh," replied Solomon, " I told him all about it: beſhide, de maſhter of de veſhel iſh my vriend; he vill tell no tales, but vill land him on ſome unfrequented part of de coaſht."

The heart of Lord St. Aubin now ſunk within him; but recollecting the letter from Somers, which aſſured Freeman he was ſafe, and concluding there was ſome myſtery in it, he reſolved to compoſe his ſpirits, and attend further to the recital.

" M

" My brother returned too ſoon," reſumed St. Aubin: " I could have wiſhed to diſpoſe of the freights which have come to hand without his knowledge."

" Come, come," rejoined the Jew, " you have made no bad ting of it; vat wid de eſhtate, and vat wid de freights, it vill put ſhixty or ſheventy touſand pounds in your vay; and den de boy being gone, you are de heir."

" Can you blame me?" reſumed St. Aubin: " I am no friend to the law that delivers every thing to an elder brother, and leaves the younger to ſtarve. What I have by my ingenuity taken from my brother is trifling, compared to what the law gave him."

" You tink as all younger broders do," rojoined the Jew, " and I tink ſo too: I am no vriend to de old ſhaying, dat

'Honeſhty iſh de beſht poliſhee.' It may be ſho ven it iſh de beſht poliſhee to be honeſht; aſh, for inſhtance, vere by fair dealing wid a ſcrutiniſhing employer ve hope to retain his favour; den it iſh de beſht poliſhee to be honeſht: but ven it iſh oderwiſe, it vould be madneſs to tink of it; vor ſhelf-preſhervation iſh de firſht law of nature. Dat iſh my creed."

"And a very good one too," cried St. Aubin; "you will find it pay you an eighth on all the extra gains in this buſineſs."

Lord St. Aubin now conſidered what plan was beſt to purſue: he had no witneſſes to this converſation, and if he entered and accuſed them they might deny it; for this reaſon he changed his mind, and determined on examining the Jew ſeparately. With this intent he retired unobſerved from the room, and leaving the

the houſe, waited at the corner of the ſtreet till the Jew ſhould return.

He had not been long in this ſituation before the Jew approached, and Lord St. Aubin, ſmothering his reſentment, accoſted him with "Good-morning, Mr. Solomon; I have a ſum idle at preſent, which I wiſh you to buy into the ſtocks for me."

The Jew profeſſed himſelf obliged, and aſked him who had the goodneſs to recommend him.

"Mr. St. Aubin," replied his lordſhip.

"Mr. Sht. Aubin is a very vorthy ſhentleman," rejoined the Jew.

A converſation now took place concerning the ſtocks and money matters in general till they arrived at his lordſhip's houſe; they then went up ſtairs, where was aſſembled the ſame party as before.

No ſooner had they reached the room than his lordſhip, who had now no further occaſion to diſſemble, ſeized the Jew by his collar: "Villain!" cried he, "look on me: I am the Lord St. Aubin. Does not your ſoul ſhudder at the ſight of me?"

"No—upon my ſhoul it doſh not," replied Solomon: "I am very glad to ſee you, and did intend to do myſhelf de honour of viſhiting you dis evening."

"Tell me," cried his lordſhip, ſtill holding him by his collar, "where is my ſon?"

"I beg you vill leave your hold," reſumed Solomon; "I cannot talk vhile you pull me about."

Sir William now approached, and put the ſame queſtion; which Lord St. Aubin again repeated.

"Do

" Do not talk altogeder," rejoined Solomon: " I have two ears, but I have only von head; derefore I can attend to but von at a time. Your ſhon is very ſhafe."

" Yes, villain Jew!" cried his lordſhip, " I overheard you at St. Aubin's, and know all your infamous practices; but wherever any thing abominable is to be carried on, a Jew is ſure to have a hand in it."

" De Jews are very muſh oblifhed to your lordſhip," replied Solomon; " but if you did overhear, you might have known dere be rogues among de Chriſtians as vell as de Jews, for dey vill ſheat dere own broder. You ſhould ſhudge wid more ſharity: dere be goot Jews and goot Chriſhtians: a remnant of all vill be ſhaved."

Freeman now approached, and requeſted his lordſhip would leave his hold. "Let the Jew ſpeak," ſaid he; "you do but interrupt him, and perhaps are treating ill one of your beſt friends."

"A Jew the friend of a Chriſtian!" rejoined his lordſhip; "that is contrary to common ſenſe."

"It iſh plain," rejoined Solomon, "dat de Chriſhtian iſh no vriend to de poor Jew; but if you vill have patience, you ſhall ſhudge vither I have not been a vriend to your lordſhip."

The Jew being now at liberty—

"I can make very great allowanſhes for your conduct," continued he; "de feelings of a parent plead in your behalf. Your ſhon is ſhafe, wid a Mr. Shomers, at Cliffdown-lodge, near Briſtol."

Lady

Lady St. Aubin now ran to him; ſhe preſſed his hand while the tears were burſting from her eyes, and thanked him for the intelligence.

"How am I," ſaid his lordſhip, "to reconcile this with what I overheard at St. Aubin's?"

"Vould you have had me loſe my vriend before dere vaſh occaſhion? He iſh my employer; he doſh not vant honeſht men to do hiſh vork, derefore I vaſh obliſhed to aſhume de rogue. But have a little patience, and you ſhall hear."

Then taking a bundle of papers from his pocket, and ſeating himſelf by a table, "Do not interrupt me," ſaid he, "and I vill relate de whole."

CHAP. X.

HAVING unfolded the papers, he delivered himſelf as follows, excepting the ſtyle of expreſſion.

" I have been employed by Mr. St. Aubin, your brother, ever ſince he commenced merchant.

" In the courſe of my dealings for him, I found that he approved of gaining fifty per cent in preference of five, and never failed ſo to do where he had an opportunity.

" It is the cuſtom of every man in trade to pleaſe his employer; as ſuch, in all argument, I took the unfair ſide of the queſtion. This inclined your brother to place in me unlimited confidence; through this

this I became acquainted with his nefarious practices reſpecting you.

" I have been the perſon employed to diſpoſe of your different freights, and by theſe papers you will learn what they netted, to the fraction of a farthing. Theſe you can compare with what your brother has or will produce, and make him account for the difference.

" To me likewiſe he entruſted the purchaſe of all your money in the ſtocks, and as it was bought in in your name, I was at all times able to diſtinguiſh it from his.

" Here is likewiſe an account of what was gained by ſuch purchaſe, or by ſelling out.

" Theſe other papers (pointing to another parcel), relate to your eſtates.

" The old ſteward you left there would not

not ſuit his purpoſe ; he kept a book for your inſpection when you ſhould return, and was on that account diſcharged.

" I acquainted your brother that I had a man who would be happy to undertake the office, and on whoſe fidelity he might depend.

" This man was bound to me by ſervices I had rendered him.

" From this man I have received an account annually of the ſums he paid Mr. St. Aubin, and at the times he paid them ; which you will find regularly put down in theſe papers, and which you can compare with the accounts from your brother.

" Laſtly, reſpecting your ſon :—

" When he came from the univerſity, he conſidered it a duty incumbent on him to look into and examine the conduct of

St.

St. Aubin, as far as related to your property, having a ſuſpicion he did not deal fairly by you.

" He took minutes of ſeveral nefarious tranſactions.

" St. Aubin grew ſuſpicious on account of the many queſtions he put to him, and on privately ſearching his portmanteau, he found thoſe minutes.

" From this period he devoted him to deſtruction.

" He acquainted me of the diſcovery, as likewiſe that it was his intention to ſend him to the coaſt of Africa. Alarmed at this intelligence, I requeſted your ſon would return to the univerſity.

" When he teaſed me with queſtions concerning my reaſons for giving ſuch advice, I hinted to him that his uncle had

had laid a plan to ſend him out of the country.

" Two or three days after this, St. Aubin called at my houſe, informed me he had ſettled his plan, and that your ſon would be on board the ſhip in leſs than twenty-four hours.

" In the utmoſt anxiety I wrote a few lines to Frederick, deſiring him inſtantly to quit his uncle's houſe, and inform me of his reſidence.

" This note I ſent by a truſty ſervant, who found an opportunity of delivering it to him in private.

" Your ſon followed my advice, and St. Aubin was outrageous at his abſence.

" He informed me the poor boy had taken the miniatures of his parents, but that he had neither taken money nor a change of clothes."

The

The Jew was now interrupted by Lady St. Aubin, who could not help burſting into tears at the recital of this mark of affection in her ſon towards his parents.

After a little time Soloman was ſuffered to proceed.

" Your ſon," ſaid he, " I am afraid, was of the ſame opinion as his father; he did not think proper to truſt a Jew, as he never acquainted me with his reſidence, therefore I had no means of ſending him money; but it was not long before I heard of him.

" St. Aubin publiſhed a hand-bill, offering a reward to any one who would reſtore him, and directing them to apply to his attorney.

" Fearful leſt Frederick ſhould again be in his power, I made an acquaintance with the attorney's clerk, and by the help

help of money engaged him in my intereſt.

" His employer was out of town when a letter came to his hands, informing him where your ſon was to be found. This letter he forwarded to me, and I inſtantly diſpatched a truſty meſſenger to caution him, leſt he ſhould be taken; but your ſon had left the place when the meſſenger arrived.

" From that time I heard no more of him till St. Aubin acquainted me that a young lady your ſon highly eſteemed had given him ſuch intelligence as enabled him to trace him to the Glouceſter coffee-houſe.

" Being anxious for his ſafety, I voluntarily offered my ſervices to take him, and alleged I had a friend who would convey him to the coaſt of Africa, or

throw

throw him overboard if required. 'God forbid,' replied St. Aubin, 'that I ſhould take his life, all I deſire is, to ſend him out of the way, and have already hired ſome men to way-lay him.'

" I obtained information who theſe men were, and met them in company with St. Aubin, who deſired them to attend to my inſtructions.

" When St. Aubin was gone, I aſked them what gratuity they were to receive, and found they were to have a hundred pounds amongſt them.

" St. Aubin had informed them your ſon was extravagant, and he wiſhed to ſend him to his father in the Weſt Indies.

" I explained the circumſtance, and by giving as much more as St. Aubin had

had promiſed, prevailed on them to relinquiſh their purpoſe.

" The men declared they would take the young gentleman, and convey him where I thought proper: after which they would call on St. Aubin for his promiſed hundred.

" I concluded this action would bind them to ſecreſy, and therefore adviſed it.

" They then went to the Glouceſter coffee-houſe, and were informed he had left the place not a minute before.

" The waiter at their requeſt, as they pleaded urgent buſineſs, walked with them to the corner of Bond-ſtreet, and pointed him out.

" The men obſerved him; but as there was a crowd of people, they were obliged to wait; at length they took him as

as he was ſpeaking to a lady, and putting him into a coach, one of them came to my houſe, and informed me of their ſucceſs, and that he had deſired the coachman to take a circuit, and come round to a houſe at Iſlington.

" I had indiſpenſable buſineſs that prevented me from attending; but ſent a confidential friend, who, at my requeſt, deſired him to return to Mr. Somers.

" This advice he promiſed to take, and I have no doubt but he is there in ſafety.

" Theſe circumſtances I intended relating to you this day, and for which purpoſe I ſat up the beſt part of laſt night, arranging the papers for your inſpection."

" What acknowledgment can I make to you," cried Lord St. Aubin, " for thu

intereſtin

ſtereſting yourſelf in my concerns, and preſerving my ſon from the power of a monſter?"

"Vat!" cried the Jew; "let me conſider:—You ſhall acknowledge dere iſh ſhome honeſhty to be found in a Jew aſh vell as in a Chriſhtian; dat is all de acknowledgment I vant: I take no brokerage in affairs of dis nature."

"Accept this ring," ſaid his lordſhip, taking one from his finger and preſenting it; "receive it as a token of my friendſhip, and of my intention to beſtow a reward on you, ſuitable to the ſervices you have rendered."

"Dere may," replied the Jew, "be ſhome excuſe in receiving a revard for a bad action; but for a goot von dere cannot; dat revards itſhelf. I have got a ight heart, and am perfectly ſhatisfied."

A ſer-

A ſervant now entered, and announced Mr. St. Aubin.

" Shew him up," ſaid his lordſhip.

" Had I not better get out of de vay?" ſaid the Jew.

" By no means," ſaid his lordſhip; " let the guilty be aſhamed: that does not appear to be your caſe."

St. Aubin entered, and ſtarted back on ſeeing the Jew.

Lord St. Aubin walked to the door of the apartment, and having ſhut it, turned to St. Aubin, and, with a ſtern aſpect, demanded of him what he had done with his ſon?

St. Aubin heſitated for a minute; but aſſuming courage, " Can I," ſaid he, " be accountable for the wild follies of youth?"

" I aſk you not," cried his lordſhip,

" to

" to be accountable for his follies, but for your own villany."

" Villany!" repeated St. Aubin: " you perhaps think a lord may uſe theſe terms with impunity to a merchant of London; but permit me to remind you, that you are not now in a land of ſlaves, nor is a merchant to be chaſtiſed as a common negro; neither do I feel inclined to bear with it."

" You muſt bear with this, and much more," rejoined his lordſhip. " I have a high reſpect for the character of Britiſh merchants; they are an ornament to the nation, and ſecond in reſpectability to none: but it would be ſingular in ſuch an extenſive body of men if there were not one to be found who could act with villany—that one is yourſelf!"

His lordſhip next recapitulated the information

formation of the Jew, on which he paraphraſed with energy and feeling; and concluded by informing him he ſhould appoint an attorney to ſettle his accounts, which muſt agree with the ſtatement delivered by Solomon, or he would find a way to compel him.

St. Aubin, confounded at the recital, and aſhamed of being detected before ſo many witneſſes, requeſted his brother would uſe precaution to prevent its publicity, and promiſed to account with him to the utmoſt farthing. After which he craved permiſſion to withdraw.

Lord St. Aubin aſſured him, if he found his accounts correct, he would ſtudy to oblige him by keeping the ſecret, but not otherwiſe.

He then accompanied him to the door, and ſhewed him the ſame degree of at-

tention as if nothing unpleaſant had occurred.

It was now propoſed by Lady St. Aubin to viſit Mr. Somers immediately, in ſearch of her ſon; but the elder Freeman, who had viſited London merely for the purpoſe of inveſtigating Edward's conduct, offering to accompany them if they would defer their journey till the morning, they agreed ſo to do.

Sir William Leſley ſignified his intention of joining in the party: "My daughter," ſaid he, "will take a pleaſure in introducing me to her friend and benefactor."

Freeman, finding Clariſſa was to accompany her father, requeſted he might likewiſe be permitted to attend.

Lord St. Aubin endeavoured to prevail on Solomon to accept of a ſeat in his carriage;

carriage; but he pleaded indiſpenſable buſineſs, and therefore, after receiving the warmeſt acknowlegments, and having promiſed to viſit them on their return, was permitted to depart.

The reſidue of the day was occupied in preparing for their journey, and poſt-horſes were ordered to be at the door by nine in the morning, his lordſhip intending to travel chief part of the way on the firſt day, ſo that he might with eaſe reach Mr. Somers's by the following afternoon.

I ſhall now leave them to put their intentions in practice, while I return to Cliffdown-lodge and its vicinity.

CHAP. XI.

DURING the time Sir Charles was returning home from Cliffdown-lodge, in company with his daughter, he appeared unuſually thoughtful, ſcarcely uttering a ſentence, unleſs it was by way of reply.

When he reached his houſe, he deſired Auguſta would attend him, as he wiſhed to have ſome converſation with her.

Auguſta having followed him and ſeated herſelf—

"I am totally at a loſs," ſaid he, "to account for the return of that young fellow who calls himſelf Theodore. Notwithſtanding his innocence appears manifeſt reſpecting the elopement of the young woman

woman from the cottage, it does not follow that he is innocent of another charge laid againſt him, which is, that of inſulting my family, by venturing to addreſs you; and which I have a ſtrong ſuſpicion he means to perſevere in.

" I am perfectly acquainted with your romantic ideas concerning him, and know they had their origin in Mr. Somers. He is a man far too much inclined to view the fair ſide of the picture, and nothing that I could advance would alter his opinion. He conceives the young man to be your equal, and frankly told me, he did not imagine the addreſſes of Theodore ought to be looked upon as an inſult to my family.

" So then a needy, proſcribed adventurer, without a ſhoe to his foot, or a guinea in his purſe, preſenting himſelf

under a borrowed name, and refuſing, through ſhame, to give any account of his family or connections, becauſe he tells a varniſhed tale that creates commiſeration, is to be believed, and I am told his addreſſes to my daughter is not an inſult!

" Mr. Somers has in ſome meaſure atoned for his folly (which, I believe, he bluſhes at the recollection of), by aſſuring me you will not again be troubled with his company, unleſs I think proper to requeſt the contrary, which I certainly ſhall not.

" Upon this promiſe, ſo far as relates to Somers, I rely; but it will be out of his power to prevent it, if you are determined to meet him.

" I confeſs," continued Sir Charles, " I ſhould not have ſuſpected you would again wiſh to renew an acquaintance with

with him, had I not obſerved the evident confuſion betrayed by your countenance when he met you in the temple, and the deſire there appeared on your part to enter into a converſation with him, as likewiſe the mortification you ſeemed to feel when he left you rather abruptly: this it is which inclines me to think you wiſh for an interview with him.

"There was likewiſe a few words fell from him at that time, which conveyed a reproach to you for ſome conduct you had manifeſted towards him; after which you drew Mrs. Somers from our company, no doubt to have a converſation reſpecting him, or to ſend ſome meſſage by her.

"Anſwer me, therefore, if my ſuſpicions are true, and let your anſwer be

dictated by candour and without hesitation."

Augusta knew not what reply to make. She found, however her father's penetration might have misled him heretofore, it had not erred in this particular.

She felt ashamed to confess her sentiments in behalf of a person whom nobody knew; and therefore replied, that Theodore having been introduced as a friend of Mr. Somers, she considered him so far entitled to respect; that she at present appeared in an unfavourable light both to him and Mr. Somers, in consequence of her having inadvertently mentioned the place where he was to be found to a person who knew his uncle, and whom she met by accident in the company of Edward.

"To

"To remove this apparent contemptable conduct in me," continued Auguſta, "I certainly wiſh for an opportunity of explaining the circumſtance."

"If that be all," reſumed Sir Charles, "you can explain it to Mr. Somers, which will be equally the ſame; and I would have you viſit him in the morning for that purpoſe: but let me warn you not to ſpeak with Theodore. I cannot ſubmit to an acquaintance being kept up with ſo ſuſpicious a character; and I inſiſt, if he ſhould attempt again to inſinuate himſelf into your favour, that you will give him ſuch an anſwer as ſhall prevent a ſimilar inſult in future, and put a ſtop to ſuch unwarrantable and audacious liberties."

Auguſta replied, ſhe was confident he

would not attempt it; and if he did, ſhe would recollect the advice given her.

With this aſſurance Sir Charles reſted ſatisfied.

On the enſuing morning Auguſta aroſe early, for the purpoſe of enjoying a walk. Every idea being centered in Theodore, her ſteps naturally inclined towards the ſpot where he reſided.

Theodore had ariſen with the ſame intention. He had not heard any explanation of Auguſta's conduct, Mrs. Somers not having had it in her power to ſpeak with her huſband alone during the preceding evening.

Theodore, notwithſtanding the apparent coolneſs he manifeſted when laſt with Auguſta, was far from feeling a reſentful ſentiment againſt her; and although his pride

pride had prompted him to write a letter to her, dictated as it was, yet did his heart recoil at the recollection of the words it conveyed; but no other alternative presented itself to him.

He had been treated with a coolness bordering upon insult; had been suspected of what his soul abhored; and, in addition to this, concluded she sought to do him a serious injury. Still he could not help reflecting how lovely Augusta appeared to him when he first beheld her, and how dear she was still to his memory.

When he arose in the morning he walked into the garden, and viewed the spot where she was seated on the preceding day. "There," cried he, "did I deliver that fatal letter. In that place did I voluntarily resign my hopes, and with it

nearly all that can render my life deſirable."

He next blamed himſelf for the unneceſſary haſte he had made uſe of.

"I ſhould have pauſed," continued he, "before I ventured on ſuch a procedure, where my future happineſs was ſo much concerned. I ſhould have endeavoured to learn if her ſentiments remained as formerly. On the contrary, or my vanity deceived me, I read reconciliation on her countenance; ſhe even congratulated me on my return to this place. Is it then poſſible ſhe can poſſeſs ſo much art as to appear happy on my return, after ſhe had ſtrove to prevent it?

"When I delivered the letter, was ſhe not all confuſion?—her countenance covered with a modeſt bluſh, while her eyes ſpoke the lively affection of her heart.—

Yet

Yet hold!" cried he, "ſhe might be happy on ſeeing me here, as it would afford her an opportunity of again informing St. Aubin. She might bluſh at my approach through the recollection of her conduct, and was it not natural that ſhe ſhould?"

Theſe ideas having ſilenced the former: "I will no longer," ſaid he, "continue viſiting the places where laſt I ſaw her, and by this conduct encourage an affection which my reaſon bids me conquer: I will walk, and enjoy the beauty of the morning."

Theodore did not reflect how incapable he was of attending to reaſon, while his heart was a ſlave to an unconquerable attachment; for no ſooner had he left the garden than he purſued the way that led to Sir Charles's.

"Yes,"

" Yes," cried he, " I will once more view the place that contains the too lovely but cruel Auguſta, and take a final farewel leave of it."

With this intent he walked up the hill till he diſcovered the houſe, and then leaning againſt an old tree that ſtood a little out of the path, " There," ſaid he, " within thoſe walls perhaps ſleeps my Auguſta, her heart a ſtranger to thoſe ſorrows I am doomed to feel. Not only unmindful of my ſufferings was ſhe, but, dictated by cruelty, ſhe wiſhed to ſacrifice the object that adored her."

Theſe reflections forced a tear from his eye, which he drew out his handkerchief to wipe away.

Auguſta had now reached the place, and beheld in ſilence the agony of mind that was depicted on his countenance.

Her

Her affection for him, the ſituation in which he had planted himſelf, and the object he was viewing, prompted her to think ſhe was the ſole occaſion of the tears which ſhe ſaw ſtanding in his eyes. Auguſta approached nearer, for the purpoſe of accoſting him, but he was wrapt up in contemplation, and did not obſerve her.

She ſtood for a minute, while he heaved a heavy ſigh; then caſting his eyes once more towards the houſe, "Ah, Auguſta!" cried he, "dear to my heart!—farewel!—the recollection of you muſt for ever torture my exiſtence!"

Auguſta could no longer ſupport her fortitude, or witneſs this ſcene in ſilence, but taking hold of his hand, and looking in his face, while a tear ſtarted in her eye, "Theodore!" ſaid ſhe, "ſpeak to me.—

Why

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Why

Why are you thus?—Have I done any thing that wounds your feelings?—Tell me, that I may have an opportunity of explaining it away."

Theodore ſtood for a moment loſt in aſtoniſhment at the ſudden appearance of Auguſta, and ſtill more aſtoniſhed at the tenderneſs ſhe manifeſted.

"Am I," cried he, "in a dream!—or is it poſſible that Auguſta has a heart to feel for the ſufferings of Theodore?"

Auguſta was now covered with bluſhes, ariſing from the conſciouſneſs of the part ſhe was acting, and caſting her eyes down, endeavoured to draw away her hand that was faſt locked in his. But Theodore preſſed it to his lips, and imprinted on it a kiſs.

"Leave me," ſaid Auguſta, making a faint attempt to extricate her hand.

"No,"

" No," cried Theodore; " we will dedicate a moment to love and reconciliation!"—Then, claſping her in his arms, he preſſed her to his heart.

" I muſt be gone," ſaid Auguſta, withdrawing herſelf from him.

Theodore, fearful of offending, immediately relinquiſhed her. " I have ſo long," ſaid he, " laboured under your diſpleaſure, and felt the ill effects of it, that I dare not venture to oppoſe you, leſt I ſhould again incur it."

Auguſta, although ſhe had but the minute before profeſſed ſo great a deſire to leave him, now ſeemed in no hurry to depart; on the contrary, ſhe requeſted he would attend, while ſhe exculpated herſelf from the charge he had laid againſt her.

Theodore

Theodore heard her recital with pleaſure, and apologiſed for his ſuſpicions.

He now entreated her to walk with him down to the lodge; but this ſhe refuſed, alleging her father would be waiting for her at breakfaſt.

"Then I will attend you home," ſaid Theodore.

To this Auguſta alſo objected, and recapitulated the converſation made uſe of by her father on the preceding evening.

"The time muſt arrive ere long," replied Theodore, "when I ſhall have it in my power to remove every unfavourable ſuſpicion from the breaſt of Sir Charles: then let St. Aubin tremble for the calumny he has thrown on my character. Till which time, Auguſta, may I be

I be permitted to hope I have obtained an intereſt in your heart?"

"How can you reconcile this converſation," ſaid Auguſta, "with your letter of laſt night? Did you not promiſe I ſhould hear no more of it?"

"You ſhould look on that letter," replied Theodore, "as the production of a mind diſtracted:—I knew not what I did."

"Well, ſir," reſumed Auguſta, "I will place the letter out of the queſtion, what reply do you think I ought to make, ſeeing my father would not approve of it, and I am totally unacquainted with your family or connections?

"Your character, I confeſs, has been cleared partly by Mr. Somers, but more particularly by a Jew in the city that Edward waited on."

"Tha

"That Jew," rejoined Theodore, "is a ſcoundrel!—It is true, I ſtand indebted to him for my liberty, and I ſhould be happy to teſtify my gratitude; but I know him to be the man who tranſacts my uncle's buſineſs; they have jointly endeavoured to rob my father. There is many a thief who would plunder a houſe, and yet his nature would recoil at murder. This has been the conduct of the Jew. He was the man whom my uncle conſulted reſpecting ſending me to the coaſt of Africa, and his conſcience not being ſufficiently hardened to be guilty of ſuch a tranſaction, he was neceſſitated to adviſe my departure from the houſe, that he might be rid of the unpleaſant buſineſs."

"I think you wrong him," ſaid Auguſta; "he ſpoke of you in high terms, and I am inclined to think it was through him

him you have been prevented this laſt time, from falling into your uncle's hands."

"That I believe," rejoined Theodore: "I do not doubt but when St. Aubin traced me, he again employed the Jew to ſend me abroad; and he has taken this plan ſooner than riſk his life or credit by following the other."

"St. Aubin!" repeated Auguſta; "is *he* your uncle?"

"I did not ſay as much," replied Theodore: "my ſtory would take up ſome time to recapitulate. If you will promiſe me your confidence, I will, at a future period, relate it to you. You will then be able to form an idea whether my addreſſes are an inſult."

"You force me to ſay a few words in my vindication," rejoined Auguſta. "If you

were a perſon whoſe fortune and connections were infinitely ſuperior to mine, I ſhould have looked upon a propoſal from you as an inſult, if I were convinced you was bound by a prior engagement; and ſuch a tale had reached my ear, but is now done away by an explanation.

"Your being the friend of Mr. Somers, and the reſpectful conduct I have met with from you, ought to have entitled you to a candid anſwer: this you would have received from me, but for the tale I had been taught to believe.

"What that candid anſwer would have conveyed, I cannot now tell you; perhaps a refuſal, delivered with my ſentiments, as reſpectful as was the propoſal.

"I mention this merely to remove from your mind the impreſſion you had received

in

in conſequence of my former treatment, leſt you ſhould think it was dictated by reviewing your ſituation."

Theodore thanked her for this candid explanation, and Auguſta, being fearful her father would be waiting for her, ſignified her wiſh to return.

Theodore attended her to the brow of the hill, and, when taking his leave, requeſted ſhe would return to him the letter he had given her.

"It is written," ſaid he, "in a ſtyle ſo contrary to my preſent feelings, and contains a promiſe which I am not in the leaſt inclined to fulfil, that I ſhould be happy if it were out of your poſſeſſion."

Auguſta took the letter from her pocket-book, but as ſhe was preparing to deliver it ſhe beheld her father, and there-

fore

fore put it up again, and wiſhed him a pleaſant walk.

Theodore obſerved Sir Charles, and, bowing reſpectfully, left her.

When Sir Charles approached, he appeared extremely angry, but did not mention any thing till he reached the breakfaſt parlour.

"After the converſation," ſaid he, "that paſſed between us laſt night, I did not expect to find you in the act of encouraging the addreſſes of a fellow who may be a notorious ſwindler, or worſe, for any thing you or I know to the contrary. I obſerved you accept a letter from him; give it to me."

Auguſta took it from her pocket-book, but heſitated in delivering it.

"What!—the ſeal is broke!" ſaid he: "you have read it!—I ſuppoſe it contains

contains a propoſal you ought not to attend to?"

"I do not wiſh to attend to it," replied Auguſta.

"I'll not read it," reſumed Sir Charles, "as the contents would no doubt aggravate my feelings; you ſhall ſend it back." Then taking pen, ink, and paper, and placing them before her, "Come," ſaid he, "write as I dictate."

"Will not this be improper," ſaid Auguſta, "for me to write to him?"

"Aye, I ſee how it is!" cried Sir Charles: "there would be no objection raiſed if you had the dictating it. But, come, do as I deſire you; I inſiſt upon it."

Auguſta obeyed.

"Now write," ſaid Sir Charles, "what I tell you."

He then repeated as follows:

'SIR,

'I have neither wiſh nor inclination to 'keep the incloſed; and you would ma- 'terially oblige me by not writing or re- 'peating to me a ſubject which will ever 'be diſagreeable. I cannot return your 'letter without teſtifying my ſurpriſe at 'the contents; as I am not aware of any 'impropriety of conduct on my part that 'could warrant ſuch a procedure in you. 'Reſting ſatisfied you will not wound my 'feelings by a repetition, I remain,

'SIR,

'Your moſt obedient,

'AUGUSTA FREEMAN.'

"There," cried Sir Charles; "now fold his letter in it, and direct it for 'Theodore Somers.'"

Auguſta,

Auguſta, having fulfilled the order of Sir Charles, he ſealed it; and ringing for a ſervant, Auguſta deſired him to convey it to Theodore, but not to wait for an anſwer.

Auguſta could not help ſmiling at the ſingularity of this circumſtance.

"What is it that provokes your mirth?" ſaid Sir Charles.

"Oh, nothing," replied Auguſta: "I was merely thinking how mortified and vexed he will be on the receipt of his letter back."

"It is juſt what he deſerves," reſumed Sir Charles. "Indeed I wonder at his aſſurance in troubling you with it; but I will anſwer for it, unleſs I had detected it, you would not have ſent it back to him."

"You may believe me," rejoined Au-

guſta, " it is what I intended to do the firſt opportunity. I ſhould have been averſe to taking it, had I ſuſpected what it contained; but from his former conduct I could have no ſuch idea, and nothing could give me greater pleaſure than by obliging you in this particular."

" Well, well," reſumed Sir Charles, " I hope it does; I think you would not make ſuch an aſſeveration if it did not."

They now ſat down to breakfaſt, and before they had finiſhed the ſervant returned.

" Did you deliver the letter into his own hands?" ſaid Sir Charles.

The ſervant replied in the affirmative.

" And was not the young gentleman rather diſpleaſed with the contents?" reſumed Sir Charles.

" He

" He bluſhed," replied the man, " but did not appear diſpleaſed; for he turned to Mr. Somers, and with a ſmile told him, ' it was what he expected.' "

The ſervant now left the room.

" You ſee," continued Sir Charles, " the fellow will not break his heart for the loſs of you; the letter did not give him a moment of uneaſineſs."

" I did not expect it would," replied Auguſta.

" No, no," rejoined Sir Charles; " he only wanted to graft his poverty upon my family; but I hope you are now convinced."

" Perfectly," replied Auguſta: " the evident pleaſure he betrayed on the receipt of it, is ſufficient of itſelf to convince me that I ſhall never again be ob-

liged to liſten to ſo diſagreeable a ſubject."

"I ſhould indeed be ſorry," reſumed Sir Charles, "to deprive you of viſiting Mr. Somers on his account, but, after what has paſſed, I think I can truſt you there with ſafety."

Auguſta thanked him, and aſſured him he might rely on her diſcretion.

She could not help reflecting with pleaſure on the ſingular manner her wiſhes had been forwarded: Sir Charles had compelled her to acknowledge her ſentiments to Theodore.

If ſhe had any reaſon for regret, it proceeded from a fear leſt he ſhould imagine ſhe had gone too far; but this ſhe had in her power to rectify by explaining the circumſtance to Mr. Somers, and for this intent ſhe determined on taking

taking the firſt opportunity of ſeeing him; ſhe therefore requeſted her father would permit her to ſpend part of the day at the lodge; to which requeſt he readily aſſented.

CHAP XII.

WHEN Auguſta reached the houſe, ſhe found Somers and Theodore in converſation, but upon her entering the room, Somers requeſted Theodore to retire, as he wiſhed to have a few minutes' converſation with Auguſta alone.

Theodore complied.

"And now, Miſs Freeman," ſaid Somers, "I have a circumſtance to relate, that probably has not come to your knowledge.

"In conſequence of the evident miſunderſtanding that exiſted between you and Theodore, and likewiſe in conſequence

quence of his ſolemn aſſeveration that he would not again renew his addreſſes, I ventured to promiſe Sir Charles that you ſhould viſit this place without being troubled with his company, unleſs Sir Charles ſhould feel inclined to alter his ſentiments reſpecting him.

" Upon this promiſe your father relies; and this I hope will plead my excuſe for deſiring him to withdraw.

" I am, notwithſtanding, firmly of opinion that the addreſs of Theodore would reflect no diſgrace on your family; and he likewiſe, at my earneſt entreaty, ſhewed me the letter you ſent this morning, and explained the converſation you had with him.

" I am therefore in an unpleaſant ſituation; obliged to exert every endeavour to keep him from your ſociety at a time

that I am confident you both have an unalterable attachment for each other; you will therefore oblige me by ſtating what plan I ought to purſue."

Auguſta replied by relating the circumſtance of the letter, which forced a ſmile into his countenance; and riſing from his chair, deſired a ſervant would acquaint Theodore he wiſhed to ſpeak with him.

Theodore attended.

"Oblige me with the letter," ſaid Somers, "that you received this morning; I poſitively muſt have it, as it releaſes me from my promiſe to Sir Charles."

Auguſta having joined in the requeſt, Theodore delivered it.

"If the old gentleman," reſumed Somers, "will thus make love for his daughter, he muſt take the conſequences. I will

I will keep the letter, leſt he ſhould diſcover the friendly footing you are upon: and then I ſhall take the liberty of ſhewing it to him; it will give him a high idea of his profound penetration: at the ſame time I reſt perfectly ſatisfied in encouraging an acquaintance between you, from the high opinion I form of Theodore, and the corroborative proofs I have received of his teſtimony."

Somers ſhortly after having occaſion to leave them, and Mrs. Somers being engaged, Theodore requeſted if ſhe was at leiſure to hear his ſtory which he had promiſed to relate.

" I cannot now attend to any thing concerning it," replied Auguſta; " and you will confer a ſingular obligation in not making me acquainted with it, as I am confident if Sir Charles were to reca-

pitulate his ſuſpicion of you, I ſhould not be able to withhold the knowledge of it from him."

But this was not Auguſta's real motive: ſhe was fearful of loſing the good opinion of Theodore. She knew that Somers had not preſſed him on the ſubject; ſhe likewiſe recollected he had not offered to acquaint her with his family or connections, till ſhe had thrown out an unfavourable ſuſpicion concerning him. Her attending to it, therefore, would ſtrongly mark her want of confidence, and muſt ſerve to leſſen her in his eſtimation.

Another, and a ſtill more powerful reaſon was, that it would appear as if it were a matter of conſequence to her in particular, and afford Theodore grounds to ſuppoſe ſhe was intereſted in the recital.

Theodore

Theodore entreated ſhe would hear him.

Auguſta replied that ſhe had made up her mind. "I ſhall be proud," continued ſhe, "to place you amongſt the number of my friends; and if you were to acquaint me with who you are, I could do no more, while my father thinks proper to diſapprove."

Theodore, upon this poſitive denial, permitted the ſecret to remain within his own breaſt; but endeavoured to improve every moment he was in her company by expreſſing the ſtrength of his attachment, wiſhing, if poſſible, to acquire an anſwer from her that would gratify his feelings, and give eaſe to his heart; but Auguſta evaded his queſtions.

Mrs. Somers now made her appearance, and teſtified the pleaſure ſhe received on ſeeing her at the lodge. Shortly after,

Somers

Somers likewiſe entered, and the converſation became general. While they were thus engaged, Sir Charles, without ſending in his name, walked into the room. The firſt object that attracted his notice, was Theodore ſitting on a chair next to his daughter.

Theodore roſe on his entrance, and, bowing reſpectfully, left the apartment.

Sir Charles then turning to Somers, "How am I to account for this?" ſaid he: "I relied on your promiſe that you would not permit my daughter to be inſulted with that fellow's company, and this is the way you keep your word."

"When I gave you my promiſe," replied Somers, "I conceived that each party had pre-determined not to renew their acquaintance; and therefore concluded it would require no trouble on my

my part, and that I ſhould not be called upon to wound my own feelings by fulfilling it.

" Excluſive of this, my promiſe was given conditionally, and was no longer binding upon me when you ſhould think proper to alter your mind, and although you might not intend to promote their acquaintance by dictating a letter this morning, yet it has had that effect, and ought to plead an excuſe for me, who am ready to take every advantage where the happineſs of an individual is at ſtake."

" I do not perfectly underſtand you," replied Sir Charles, " and ſhall therefore take it as a favour if you will oblige me with an explanation."

Somers produced the letters. " Here is a letter," ſaid he, " from Theodore, promiſing

promiſing not to offend her for the future with his company or addreſſes.

"This letter you compelled your daughter to ſend back, requeſting him not to repeat ſo diſagreeable a ſubject, and declaring ſhe was not conſcious of having merited ſuch a conduct from him."

"Let me ſee them," rejoined Sir Charles.

"Aye," continued he, "I ſee I have been fairly outwitted; but it ſhall be the laſt time they ſhall ever be together.

"I can find an excuſe for your conduct on account of the high opinion you entertain of him; but you cannot eſtimate my feelings, and therefore muſt make allowances for me, if I take effectual means to prevent a repetition of this."

Somers endeavoured to ſoften his reſentment,

ſentment, but Sir Charles was inflexible. "I am going a little way on ſome buſineſs," ſaid he, addreſſing himſelf to Auguſta, "and ſhall call for you on my return."

Somers attended him to the gate:— "You look on this buſineſs," ſaid he, "in too ſerious a light; you may rely on the diſcretion of Auguſta; ſhe will not give him any encouragement till he is able, by declaring himſelf, to gain your ſanction."

"Yes, yes, ſhe is very diſcreet," rejoined Sir Charles, "and has certainly outwitted me. I have no doubt but you have been enjoying a laugh at my expence: ſhe will have no cauſe in future to call my penetration in queſtion."

Sir Charles now purſued his way home, having determined on the plan he intended

tended to purſue the moment he diſcovered them together, and was conſiderably ſtrengthened in his reſolution, when he found the ridiculous office he had fulfilled by ſending back the letter.

He could eaſily pardon himſelf for the error he committed, but could find no excuſe for Auguſta or Somers, who, he conſidered, ought to have informed him of it.

When he reached his houſe, he ſearched for and found the hand-bill, which offered a hundred pounds reward for the apprehenſion of Theodore; and being a magiſtrate, he immediately ordered the attendance of two conſtables, who he took with him to the lodge.

Auguſta was in the garden, in converſation with Mrs. Somers, when ſhe beheld her father approaching with the two

two men. It immediately occurring to her the buſineſs he was upon, ſhe haſtened to the houſe for the purpoſe of appriſing Theodore.

She had ſcarcely time to relate her fears, before Sir Charles and the two men made their appearance.

Sir Charles ordered them to ſeize Theodore, and confine him in his houſe till they ſhould receive further inſtructions.

"Hold!" cried Somers; "firſt let me know the meaning of this outrage."

"My conduct is ſtrictly legal," replied Sir Charles; "I have an undoubted authority to apprehend any man who paſſes under a borrowed name, and who can give no account of himſelf. But, waving that plea, here is a bill offering a reward for his apprehenſion. Can I, therefore, conſiſtent with my duty as a magiſtrate, ſuffer

ſuffer him to remain at large?—It is poſſible, had he not attempted to do me a ſerious injury, that I might have winked on it, and, for the reſpect I had for you, have permitted him to remain unmoleſted; but you have forfeited my friendſhip by encouraging him to proceed in a matter that I ſtrictly forbid."

"It ſeems, then," rejoined Somers, "you make uſe of your authority for the purpoſe of gratifying a private reſentment; this, you muſt allow, is degrading to a magiſtrate; and ſo far does it leſſen you in my eſtimation, that I cannot help adding, this is the firſt inſtance I ever met with, where a juſtice of the peace, in fulfilling his office, forgot to adopt the manners and conduct of a gentleman.

"Theodore is under my protection, and I will be anſwerable for his conduct.

You

You would act wisely by sending the men away, as I shall not submit to his being taken from my house."

"If Sir Charles," said Theodore, "will have the goodness to retire with me, I will so far explain myself, as to shew him the impropriety of this step."

"I want no explanation from you," cried Sir Charles: "I have not been a magistrate so many years, but I must be aware of the shuffling pretences made use of by vagabonds to avoid justice." He then again repeated his order that the men would seize him.

The men obeyed.

"I am not one of those," said Somers, "who can plead a justification for opposing the civil power; but when a magistrate, for the professed purpose of satisfying a private pique, will wantonly devote

vote an individual to deſtruction, as I conceive is the caſe in the preſent inſtance, it does become me to prevent it, and I will take the conſequences on myſelf."

"Let me ſee," cried Sir Charles, "who it is that dares to moleſt a magiſtrate in the exerciſe of his duty?"

"Theodore," ſaid Somers, "has been given up to his relations ſince the handbill was publiſhed, therefore I conſider it of no effect." He then rung the bell: "Deſire," ſaid he, "every man ſervant I have to come here this inſtant."

The various ſervants entered.

"Now," continued Somers, "take thoſe two men (pointing to the conſtables), and convey them to the outſide of my gate."

A ſcuffle enſued: Sir Charles was outrageous,

rageous, and aſſiſted the conſtables, who ſtill refuſed to relinquiſh Theodore.

During this ſcene of confuſion a maid ſervant entered, and informed them Lord St. Aubin wiſhed to ſpeak with Mr. Somers.

" Heavens!" cried Theodore, " my father." In an inſtant Lord St. Aubin, who was anxious to behold his ſon, entered, followed by Lady St. Aubin, Sir William Leſley, Clariſſa, and the two Freemans.

" Which is Theodore Somers?" cried his lordſhip.

" Where is Frederick St. Aubin, my ſon?" exclaimed her ladyſhip.

" Villains! unhand me!" cried Theodore; and exerting his utmoſt ſtrength, extricated himſelf, and flew to the arms

of

of his mother, who nearly fainted through excefs of joy.

Lord St. Aubin was highly enraged at the fituation in which he beheld his fon when he entered, and feizing one of the men by the collar, " By what authority," cried he, " did you dare to lay a finger on that young gentleman ?"

Somers interpofed, and affured him the men were innocent; " They acted," faid he, " confiftent with orders they received from a magiftrate; here has been a miftake, every thing will now be rectified."

Sir William likewife interpofed, and his lordfhip was prevailed upon to relinquifh his hold.

Sir Charles then defired the conftables to quit the room.

Theodore now threw himfelf into the arms

arms of his father, who preſt him to his heart, while the tears of joy that ſtarted in his eyes teſtified the feelings of a parent.

Every one now ſpoke together; all was a ſcene of confuſed joy; in which each partook excepting Sir Charles, who felt aſhamed of the part he had been acting.

"Let me know," ſaid Lord St. Aubin, "at whoſe inſtigation my ſon was being dragged like a common felon, that I may thank him as I ought."

Somers again interpoſed, and aſſured him there had been an error.

Lord St. Aubin turned to Theodore, and repeated his enquiry.

Theodore, who did not wiſh to create a miſunderſtanding between his father and Sir Charles, heſitated.

Sir Charles came forward, and attempted an apology, pleading in excuſe the leading circumſtances that had prompted him ſo to act.

" I have heard," rejoined his lordſhip, " of my ſon's attachment to your daughter; but, if he will follow my advice, he will recollect the indignant treatment he has met with, and no longer court the honour of an alliance with your family."

Sir Charles conſidered this expreſſion as an inſult, and therefore replied, " the family of St. Aubin would not be diſgraced by ſuch an alliance, which he was as little deſirous of promoting as his lordſhip."

Theodore interfered. " Permit me, my father," ſaid he, " as the firſt requeſt I ever had the power to make, that you will

will not embitter the pleaſure this meeting affords me by any recrimination.

" Sir Charles knew not who I was; I appeared to him in the light of an adventurer who inſulted his family. If you continue this argument, words will paſs on both ſides that cannot be recalled, the conſequence of which will prove fatal to my happineſs."

Lord St. Aubin, anxious to oblige his ſon, turned to Sir Charles, and aſked him if he could excuſe the haſty words of a parent.

" Undoubtedly," replied Sir Charles; " and when you conſider me in the ſame light, I am confident you will excuſe my conduct, and what has fallen from my lips."

Lord St. Aubin now approached him, and requeſted what was paſſed might be conſigned to oblivion.

Sir Charles readily assented: and then turning to Somers, "Mr. Somers," said he, "I shall for the future have a high opinion of your judgment."

Somers thanked him: "I was confident," said he, "my young friend had not deceived me."

"Is this Mr. Somers?" said his lordship.

Somers bowed an assent.

"Mr. Somers," continued his lordship, "I reverence your virtue and benevolence; accept the effusions of a heart overflowing with gratitude; you have conjointly with others, by protecting my son, preserved the life of his father."

"I sincerely thank your lordship for your good opinion," replied Somers. "Be assured, the happiness I received in the society of your son, whose amiable disposi-

disposition is infinitely above what I have abilities to relate, has amply repaid me for the trifling assistance I rendered. You will therefore materially oblige me by saying nothing further on the subject. Then turning to Clarissa, who he now for the first time discovered, "Is it possible," cried he, "that I have once more the pleasure of beholding you under my roof! You may now accept of my protection without fearing the censure of the world; Heaven has restored my Louisa to me: Mrs. Somers will be proud of your society, and you will in some measure compensate for the loss I shall sustain by being deprived of Theodore."

"My dear friend," said Clarissa, taking his hand, "I know not how I shall find words to relate the joyful occurrence that has taken place since last we were to-

gether. I have gained a protector in Sir William Lesley, my father."

Clarissa was proceeding to thank him for his offer, but Somers stood lost in astonishment.

Freeman came forward and explained; after which Sir William approached, and with the affection of a friend, prompted by the feelings of a parent, thanked him for the kindness he had manifested to his daughter.

"Oblige me," cried Somers, interrupting him, "by saying nothing further on the subject. But permit me to congratulate you both on this happy and unexpected event."

Somers next introduced Mrs. Somers, and afterwards Augusta; she was but in a plain morning dress, yet was her beauty sufficiently conspicuous, and more particularly

particularly at this time, as it was heightened by the modeſt bluſh occaſioned by the uncommon attention paid her by his lordſhip, who came forward, and taking her hand, "Frederick," ſaid he, "you ought to rejoice in your misfortunes, ſince it has thus conducted you to happineſs. So truly amiable does this young lady appear, that I am neceſſitated to become a ſuitor in your behalf to Sir Charles, and ſhould he agree to my requeſt, I ſhall have found two children inſtead of one, as I already feel a parent's affection for her."

"I ſhall certainly," rejoined Sir Charles, "endeavour to promote the happineſs of all parties, at leaſt as far as my conſent will be the means; but I cannot anſwer for Auguſta.

" Frederick muſt ſpeak with her concerning it.

" And now, Edward," continued he, turning to his nephew, " permit me to congratulate you on having found Clariſſa, for whoſe ſafety you appeared ſo anxious. If I may judge from the pleaſure there appears in your countenance, her having diſcovered a father is not a barrier to your happineſs; and if ſo, I ſhall be the firſt to rejoice in it."

" I aſſure you," rejoined Sir William, " ſo far from being a barrier, I ſhall be both proud and happy in promoting it; confident that by ſo doing, I ſtudy the future welfare and felicity of my daughter."

Somers now requeſted their company to dinner, which invitation they accepted.

After

After they had dined, Auguſta, who wiſhed to have ſome converſation with Clariſſa, drew her from the company and ſtrolled into the garden.

They had not been gone more than a quarter of an hour before Theodore and Edward followed.

Lord St. Aubin, who had viſited Cliffdown lodge for the purpoſe of claiming his ſon, and who had material buſineſs that would require his attention ſhortly in London, thought this would be a favourable opportunity of expediting Frederick's wiſhes relative to Auguſta, and therefore obſerved to Sir Charles, that as there appeared to be an unity of ſentiment between their children, they could not too ſoon ſettle the terms on which their happineſs was to be completed.

Sir Charles replied, by ſtating the fortune he ſhould beſtow on Auguſta, and the jointure he ſhould expect her to have in return.

Somers, thinking his company would be an intruſion, apologiſed for leaving them, and went in purſuit of the abſent party.

He ſhortly diſcovered Theodore and Auguſta ſeated by themſelves in an alcove.

Theodore called to him: "Mr. Somers," ſaid he, "I muſt treſpaſs further on your generoſity, by requeſting you will plead with Miſs Freeman in my behalf; I cannot prevail on her to favour me with a definitive anſwer."

"How is this?" ſaid Somers, addreſſing himſelf to Auguſta; "have you forgot

got the uſeful leſſon I once taught you, that 'Few and fleeting are the moments allotted for happineſs in this life,' &c.; but if you have, I ſtill remember what you once informed me reſpecting your ſentiments of Theodore, and, to ſave you from the trouble of confeſſion, I will rehearſe it.

"Mr. Somers," rejoined Auguſta, "you ſhould not betray the confidence I repoſed in you."

"Perhaps," reſumed Somers, "you conceive the moments of courtſhip ſo pleaſant, they ought to be extended to their utmoſt limits; but, rely upon my word, when Theodore takes upon himſelf the character of a huſband, he will not forget the lover; his affection, being firmly rooted, will always continue the

ſame: therefore, upon my recommendation, oblige him with a candid anſwer."

Freeman and Clariſſa joining them at this time, and having heard a part of what had fallen from the lips of Somers, "How ſingular is this!" ſaid Freeman; "my couſin was nearly expiring in the abſence of Theodore, and now he courts her acceptance, ſhe appears to decline the offer; but I will ſoon ſettle this difficult buſineſs." Then taking her hand, and placing it in Theodore's, "Let me now ſee," continued he, "if you have the cruelty to withdraw it."

Theodore preſſed her hand, which preſſure Auguſta returned.

"If I were ever ſo inclined to recede," ſaid ſhe, "I find it would be impoſſible, and

and therefore muſt ſubmit to imperious neceſſity."

"To the dictates of your heart," rejoined Freeman; "a heart which, you have frequently declared, glows with an animated affection for him."

"To this aſſertion," rejoined Clariſſa, "I can bear teſtimony."

"Theodore," ſaid Auguſta, "I muſt really fly to you for protection, as they, by betraying my confidence, produce a bluſh upon my cheek; therefore, to end the diſpute, think what you would have me to ſay, and conclude it uttered."

Theodore now claſped her in his arms, while his eyes teſtified the complete happineſs he enjoyed.

At this juncture, Lord St. Aubin and Sir Charles approached.

"I have," ſaid Freeman, addreſſing himſelf

himſelf to Sir Charles, " been prevailing with Auguſta to accept the hand of Theodore."

" I am of opinion," rejoined Sir Charles, " you did not find it an arduous undertaking. It has, however, relieved me from the neceſſity of inveſtigating her ſentiments, and therefore, as his lordſhip has agreed with me concerning the preliminaries, I ſhall complete their happineſs." Then taking the hand of Auguſta, preſented her to Theodore, at the ſame time aſſuring him, the pleaſure it afforded was more than he could find words to expreſs.

Lord St. Aubin, who had witneſſed this ſcene, propoſed, as he had almoſt an immediate occaſion to viſit London, that the ceremony ſhould be performed at the expiration of two days; and, as

Auguſta

Auguſta made no reply, Sir Charles gave it his hearty concurrence.

Shortly after adjourning to the houſe, they acquainted Sir William of their determination; who, in return, at the inſtigation of Somers, propoſed the ſame day for ſurrendering Clariſſa to Edward.

When the evening approached, Sir Charles invited his brother and nephew, together with Sir William and his daughter, to his houſe; requeſting they would take up their reſidence with him during their ſtay in the country; and Somers entreated Lord and Lady St. Aubin to remain at Cliffdown-lodge, in company with their ſon.

On the following day Sir Thomas and Lady Blandford arrived, in company with Mr. Bridport, who had entered on the

the living beſtowed on him by Sir Charles.

Somers expreſſed his pleaſure on their arrival, and introduced Theodore to Sir Thomas in his real character.

The period having approached that was to put Theodore in poſſeſſion of Auguſta, and Edward in the poſſeſſion of Clariſſa, Mr. Bridport was called upon to perform the ſacred office.

Lord and Lady St. Aubin remained with Somers for two or three days, and, at the requeſt of Sir Charles, conſented that Theodore and Auguſta ſhould reſide with him for a few weeks.

Having taken an affectionate leave of Somers, his lordſhip with Lady St. Aubin returned to London.

Sir William Leſley attended the elder

Freeman

Freeman to his houſe, in company with Clariſſa and Edward.

Sir Thomas took leave of Somers; but recollecting the fate of Mrs. Bentley, he ordered a tomb to be erected over her grave; a mark of reſpect, which ſerved more as a monument that reminded him of his folly, than to perpetuate the memory of the almoſt unknown character over whom it was raiſed.

Mrs. Sternhold, in company with her huſband, paid a viſit to Somers, and felt more pleaſure in her reconciliation than it was poſſible ſhe could enjoy by perpetuating her inveteracy.

Morris, who had acted upon the principle ſuggeſted by Lord St. Aubin, and who had informed Sir William his daughter was dead, thinking thereby that his conduct would eſcape inveſtigation, and

that

that he ſhould be able to preſerve his friendſhip, which he ſtood much in need of, having heard Sir William had diſcovered Clariſſa, never after made his appearance.

Mr. St. Aubin delivered a fair ſtatement to his lordſhip of all the monies he had received, and accounted with him to a fraction.

Lord St. Aubin forgave his paſt conduct, and invited him to his houſe; yet ſuch was the ſhame St. Aubin endured, ariſing from conſcious guilt, that not all the entreaties of his brother could prevail on him to accept the invitation.

Iſaac Solomon refuſed any gratuity for the ſervices he had rendered to Theodore.

Lord St. Aubin made uſe of every entreaty,

treaty, and declared, that as he had loſt ſo valuable an employer as Mr. St. Aubin, he ought in return to accept of ſome compenſation in lieu of it.

To which the Jew replied, that he had merely courted the cuſtom and connection of St. Aubin as it afforded him an opportunity of ſerving his lordſhip; that having now no further occaſion ſo to do, he ſhould have relinquiſhed his employ had it not been withdrawn from him; and therefore his lordſhip was by no means indebted for the loſs he ſuſtained.

Theodore made every apology to the Jew for the unworthy ſuſpicions he entertained of him, and explained the cauſes from whence thoſe ſuſpicions aroſe.

The

The Jew declared there was no occaſion for an apology, as his conjecture was the natural reſult of the practice he daily witneſſed.

Theodore in return preſented him with a ring, in token of the high eſtimation in which he held him, and the grateful remembrance he ſhould ever retain of his ſervices.

Having thus preſented Theodore to his parents, and Clariſſa to her father, and ſeen them happily united to the objects of their choice:—

Having brought Sir Thomas to a ſenſe of his duty, and conducted him to her who alone could render him happy:—

And having alſo reſtored the woe-worn Somers to that felicity he languiſhed for, but which he had been ſo unjuſtly deprived

prived of:—I ſhall leave them to the enjoyment of that domeſtic comfort, to which I think them ſo eminently entitled.

FINIS.

T. Daviſon,
Whitefriars.

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